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WAR AND SELF-DETERMINATION



SRI AUROBINDO
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The Essays included in this Collection were all published in the *ARYA* (1916-1920) except the Foreword and *The League of Nations* which were especially written for the first edition (1920). *After the War* was omitted in the first edition and is now added here.

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FOREWORD

(To the first edition)

The four essays¹ published in this volume were not written at one time or conceived with any intentional connection between them in idea or purpose. The first was written in the early months of the war, two others when it was closing, the last recently during the formation and first operations of that remarkably ill-jointed stumbling and hesitating machine, the League of Nations. But still they happen to be bound together by a common idea or at least look at four related subjects from a single general standpoint,—the obvious but practically quite forgotten truth that the destiny of the race in this age of crisis and revolution will depend much more on the spirit of which we are than on the machinery we shall use. A few words on the present bearing of this truth by way of foreword may not be out of place.

The whole difficulty of the present situation turns upon the peculiar and critical character of the age in which we are living. It is a period of immense and rapid changes so swift that few of us who live among them can hope to seize their whole burden or their inmost meaning or to form any safe estimate of their probable outcome. Great hopes are abroad, high and large ideals

¹ A fifth one ("After the War") has been added in this edition

fill the view, enormous forces are in the field. It is one of those vast critical moments in the life of the race when all is pressing towards change and reconstitution. The ideals of the future, especially the ideals of freedom, equality, commonalty, unity, are demanding to be brought out from their limited field in the spiritual life or the idealism of the few and to be given some beginning of a true soul of action and bodily shape in the life of the race. But banded against any such fulfilment there are powerful obstacles, and the greatest of them come not from outside but from within. For they are the old continued impulses and obstinate recalcitrance of mankind's past nature, the almost total subjection of its normal mind to egoistic, vital and material interests and ambitions which make not for union but for strife and discord, the plausibilities of the practical reason which looks at the possibilities of the day and the morrow and shuts its eyes to the consequences of the day after, the habits of pretence and fiction which impel men and nations to pursue and forward their own interest under the camouflage of a specious idealism, a habit made up only partly of the diplomatic hypocrisy of politicians, but much more of a general half voluntary self-deception, and, finally, the inrush of blinder unsatisfied forces and crude imperfect idealisms—of such is the creed of Bolshevism—to take advantage of the unrest and dissatisfaction prevalent in such times and lay hold for a while on the life of mankind. It is these things which we see dominant around us and not in the least

degree any effort to be of the right spirit and evolve from it the right method. The one way out harped on by the modern mind which has been as much blinded as enlightened by the victories of physical science, is the approved western device of salvation by machinery ; get the right kind of machine to work and, everything can be done, this seems to be the modern creed. But the destinies of mankind cannot be turned out to order in an American factory. It is a subtler thing than that which is now putting its momentous problem before us, and if the spirit of the things we profess is absent or falsified, no method or machinery can turn them out for us or deliver the promised goods. That is the one truth which the scientific and industrialised modern mind forgets always, because it looks at process and commodity and production and ignores the spirit in man and the deeper inner law of his being.

The elimination of war is one of the cherished ideals and expectations of the age. But what lies at the root of this desire ? A greater unity of heart, sympathy, understanding between men and nations, a settled will to get rid of national hatreds, greeds, ambitions, all the fertile seeds of strife and war ? If so, it is well with us and success will surely crown our efforts. But of this deeper thing there may be something in sentiment, but there is still very little in action and dominant motive. For the masses of men the idea is rather to labour and produce and amass at ease and in security without the disturbance of war ; for the statesmen and governing

classes the idea is to have peace and security for the maintenance of past acquisitions and an untroubled domination and exploitation of the world by the great highly organised imperial and industrial nations without the perturbing appearance of new unsatisfied hungers and the peril of violent unrests, revolts, revolutions. War, it was hoped at one time, would eliminate itself by becoming impossible, but that delightfully easy solution no longer commands credit. But now it is hoped to conjure or engineer it out of existence by the machinery of a league of victorious nations admitting the rest, some if they will, others whether they like it or not, as subordinate partners or as proteges. In the magic of this just and beautiful arrangement the intelligence and good will of closeted statesmen and governments supported by the intelligence and good will of the peoples is to combine and accommodate interests, to settle or evade difficulties, to circumvent the natural results, the inevitable karma of national selfishness and passions and to evolve out of the present chaos a fair and charmingly well mechanised cosmos of international order, security, peace and welfare. Get the clock work going, put your penny-worth of excellent professions or passably good intentions in the slot and all will go well, this seems to be the principle. But it is too often the floor of Hell that is paved with these excellent professions and passable intentions, and the cause is that while the better reason and will of man may be one hopeful factor in Nature, they are not the whole of nature

and existence and not by any means the whole of our human nature. There are other and very formidable things in us and in the world and if we juggle with them or put on them, in order to get them admitted, these masks of reason and sentiment,—as unfortunately we have all the habit of doing and that is still the greater part of the game of politics,—the results are a foregone conclusion. War and violent revolution can be eliminated, if we will, though not without immense difficulty, but on the condition that we get rid of the inner causes of war and the constantly accumulating karma of successful injustice of which violent revolutions are the natural reactions. Otherwise, there can be only at best a fallacious period of artificial peace. What was in the past will be sown still in the present and continue to return on us in the future.

The intelligent mind or the best intellectual reason and science of man are not the sole disposers of our future. Fortunately for the order of things a greater unseen power, a Universal Will, or, if you please, a universal Force or Law is there which not only gives us all the framework and conditions of our idea and effort, but evolves by them and by the law of these conditions out of the thing in being the thing that is to be. And this power deals with us not so much according to the devices of our reason, the truths or fictions of our intelligence, but much rather according to the truth of what man is and the real soul and meaning of what he does. God is not to be deceived, says the Scrip-

ture. The modern mind does not believe in God, but it believes in Nature : but Nature too is not to be deceived ; she enforces her law, she works out always her results from the thing that really is and from the real spirit and character of the energy we put into action. And this especially is one of the ages in which mankind is very closely put to the question. The hopes, the ideals, the aspirations that are abroad in it are themselves so many severe and pregnant questions put to us, not merely to our intelligence but to the spirit of our being and action. In this fateful examination it is not skill and cleverness, machinery and organisation which will ultimately prevail,—that was the faith which Germany professed, and we know how it ended,—but the truth and sincerity of our living. It is not impossible for man to realise his ideals so that he may move on to yet greater undreamed things, but on condition that he makes them totally an inner in order that they may become too an outer reality. The changes which this age of reconstruction portends will certainly come, but the gain they will bring to humanity depends on the spirit which governs us during the time of their execution.

We of to-day have not the excuse of ignorance since we have before us perfectly clear ideals and conditions. Freedom and unity, the self-determination of men and nations in the framework of a life drawn together by co-operation, comradeship, brotherhood if it may be, the acceptance of a close interrelation of the common aims and interests of the race, an increasing oneness of human

THE PASSING OF WAR ?

The progress of humanity proceeds by a series of imaginations which the Will in the race turns into accomplished facts and a train of illusions which contain each of them an inevitable truth. The truth is there in the secret Will and Knowledge that are conducting our affairs for us and it reflects itself in the soul of mankind; the illusion is in the shape we give to that reflection, the veil of arbitrary fixations of time, place and circumstance which that deceptive organ of knowledge, the human intellect, weaves over the face of the Truth. Human imaginations are often fulfilled to the letter; our illusions on the contrary find the truth behind them realised most unexpectedly, at a time, in ways, under circumstances far other than those we had fixed for them.

Man's illusions are of all sorts and kinds, some of them petty though not unimportant,—for nothing in the world is unimportant,—others vast and grandiose. The greatest of them all are those which cluster round the hope of a perfected society, a perfected race, a terrestrial millennium. Each new idea religious or social which takes possession of the epoch and seizes on large masses of men, is in turn to be the instrument of these high realisations; each in turn betrays the hope which gave it its

not only as an ideal but as a clear condition of the result at which we aim, it has to be accepted as a leading factor of the problem to be worked out, the difficulties sincerely considered and met and a way found by which without evasion or equivocation and without unnecessary delay it can be developed and given its proper place in the solution. But it is the very opposite method that has been adopted by the governments of the world, and admitted by its peoples. The natural result is that things are being worked out in the old way with a new name or at the most with some halting change and partial improvement of the method.

The botched constitution and limping action of the League of Nations is this result of this ancient man-œuvre. The League has been got into being by sacrificing the principles which governed the idea behind its inception. The one thing that has been gained is a formal, regularised and established instrument by which the governments of the leading nations can meet together habitually, consult, accommodate their interests, give some kind of consideration to the voice and the claim of the smaller free nations, try to administer with a common understanding certain common or conflicting interests, delay dangerous outbreaks and collisions or minimise them when they come, govern the life of the nations that are not free and not already subjects of the successful empires under the cover of a mandate instead of the rough and tumble chances of a scramble for markets, colonies and dependencies. The machine does

not seem to be acting even for these ends with any remarkable efficiency, but it is at least something, it may be said, that it can be got to act at all. In any case it is an accomplished fact which has to be accepted without enthusiasm, for it merits none, but with a practical acquiescence or an enforced recognition. All the more reason that the imperfections it embodies and the evils and dangers its action involves or keeps in being, should not be thrust into the background, but kept in the full light so that the imperfections may be recognised and mended and there may be some chance of avoiding the worst incidence of the threatened evils and dangers. And all the more too that the ideals which have been ignored or converted in the practice into a fiction, should insist on themselves and, defrauded of the present, still lift their voice to lay their claim on the future.

For these ideals stand and they represent the greater aims of the spirit in man which through all the denials, obstacles and imperfections of his present incomplete nature knows always the perfection towards which it moves and the greatness of which it is capable. Circumstances and force and external necessity and past nature may still be too strong for us, the Rudra powers still govern our destinies and the Lords of truth and justice and the Lords of love have to wait for their reign, but if the light of the ideal is kept burning in its flame of knowledge and its flame of power, it will seize even on these things and create out of their evil its greater inevitable good. At present it may seem only an idea and a word

unable to become a living reality, but it is the Idea and the Word expressing what was concealed in the Spirit which preside over creation. The time will come when they will be able to seize on the Force that works and turn it into the instrument of a greater and fairer creation. The nearness or the distance of the time depends on the fidelity of the mind and will of man to the best that he sees and the insistence of his self-knowledge, unobsessed by subjection to the circumstances he suffers and the machinery he uses, to live out its truth within himself so that his environment may accept it and his outward life be shaped in its image.

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force to conquer. And the reason is plain enough to whosoever chooses to see; it is that no change of ideas or of the intellectual outlook upon life, no belief in God or Avatar or Prophet, no victorious science or liberating philosophy, no social scheme or system, no sort of machinery internal or external can really bring about the great desire implanted in the race, true though that desire is in itself and the index of the goal to which we are being led. Because man is himself not a machine nor a device, but a being and a most complex one at that, therefore he cannot be saved by machinery; only by an entire change which shall affect all the members of his being, can he be liberated from his discords and imperfections.

One of the illusions incidental to this great hope is the expectation of the passing of war. This grand event in human progress is always being confidently expected, and since we are now all scientific minds and rational beings, we no longer expect it by a divine intervention, but assign sound physical and economical reasons for the faith that is in us. The first form taken by this new gospel was the expectation and the prophecy that the extension of commerce would be the extinction of war. Commercialism was the natural enemy of militarism and would drive it from the face of the earth. The growing and universal lust of gold and the habit of comfort and the necessities of increased production and intricate interchange would crush out the lust of power and dominion and glory and battle. Gold-hunger or commodity-hunger would drive out earth-hunger, the dharma of the Vaishya

would set its foot on the dharma of the Kshatriya and give it its painless quietus. The ironic reply of the gods has not been long in coming. Actually this very reign of commercialism, this increase of production and interchange, this desire for commodities and markets and this piling up of a huge burden of unnecessary necessities has been the cause of half the wars that have since afflicted the human race. And now we see militarism and commercialism united in a loving clasp, coalescing into a sacred biune duality of national life and patriotic aspiration and causing and driving by their force the most irrational, the most monstrous and nearly cataclysmic, the hugest war of modern and indeed of all historic times.

Another illusion was that the growth of democracy would mean the growth of pacifism and the end of war. It was fondly thought that wars are in their nature dynastic and aristocratic; greedy kings and martial nobles driven by earth-hunger and battle-hunger, diplomatists playing at chess with the lives of men and the fortunes of nations, these were the guilty causes of war who drove the unfortunate peoples to the battlefield like sheep to the shambles. These proletariates, mere food for powder, who had no interest, no desire, no battle-hunger driving them to armed conflict, had only to become instructed and dominant to embrace each other and all the world in a free and fraternal amity. Man refuses to learn from that history of whose lessons the wise prate to us; otherwise the story of old democracies ought to have been enough to prevent this particular illusion. In any case the answer of the

gods has been, here too, sufficiently ironic. If kings and diplomatists are still often the movers of war, none more ready than the modern democracy to make itself their enthusiastic and noisy accomplice, and we see even the modern spectacle of governments and diplomats hanging back in affright or doubt from the yawning clamorous abyss while angry shouting peoples impel them to the verge. Bewildered pacifists who still cling to their principles and illusions, find themselves howled down by the people and, what is piquant enough, by their own recent comrades and leaders. The socialist, the syndicalist, the internationalist of yesterday stands forward as a banner-bearer in the great mutual massacre and his voice is the loudest to cheer on the dogs of war.

Another recent illusion was the power of Courts of Arbitration and Concerts of Europe to prevent war. There again the course that events immediately took was sufficiently ironic; for the institution of the great Court of international arbitration was followed up by a series of little and great wars which led by an inexorable logical chain to the long-dreaded European conflict, and the monarch who had first conceived the idea, was also the first to unsheath his sword in a conflict dictated on both sides by the most unrighteous greed and aggression. In fact this series of wars, whether fought in Northern or Southern Africa, in Manchuria or the Balkans, were marked most prominently by the spirit which disregards cynically that very idea of inherent and existing rights, that balance of law and equity upon which alone arbitra-

tion can be founded. As for the Concert of Europe, it seems far enough from us now, almost antediluvian in its antiquity, as it belongs indeed to the age before the deluge; but we can remember well enough what an unmusical and discordant concert it was, what a series of fumbblings and blunderings and how its diplomacy led us fatally to the inevitable event against which it struggled. Now it is suggested by many to substitute a United States of Europe for the defunct Concert and for the poor helpless Hague tribunal an effective Court of international law with force behind it to impose its decisions. But so long as men go on believing in the sovereign power of machinery, it is not likely that the gods either will cease from their studied irony.

There have been other speculations and reasonings; ingenious minds have searched for a firmer and more rational ground of faith. The first of these was propounded in a book by a Russian writer which had an enormous success in its day but has now passed into the silence. Science was to bring war to an end by making it physically impossible. It was mathematically proved that with modern weapons two equal armies would fight each other to a standstill, attack would become impossible except by numbers thrice those of the defence and war therefore would bring no military decision but only an infructuous upheaval and disturbance of the organised life of the nations. When the Russo-Japanese war almost immediately proved that attack and victory were still possible and the battle-fury of man superior to the fury

of his death-dealing engines, another book was published called by a title which has turned into a jest upon the writer, the "Great Illusion", to prove that the idea of a commercial advantage to be gained by war and conquest was an illusion and that as soon as this was understood and the sole benefit of peaceful interchange realised, the peoples would abandon a method of settlement now chiefly undertaken from motives of commercial expansion, yet whose disastrous result was only to disorganise fatally the commercial prosperity it sought to serve. The present war came as the immediate answer of the gods to this sober and rational proposition. It has been fought for conquest and commercial expansion and it is proposed, even when it has been fought out on the field, to follow it up by a commercial struggle between the belligerent nations.

The men who wrote these books were capable thinkers, but they ignored the one thing that matters, human nature. The present war has justified to a certain extent the Russian writer, though by developments he did not foresee; scientific warfare has brought military movement to a standstill and baffled the strategist and the tactician, it has rendered decisive victory impossible except by overwhelming numbers or an overwhelming weight of artillery. But this has not made war impossible, it has only changed its character; it has at the most replaced the war of military decisions by that of military and financial exhaustion aided by the grim weapon of famine. The English writer on the other hand erred

by isolating the economic motive as the one factor that weighed; he ignored the human lust of dominion which, carried into the terms of commercialism, means the undisputed control of markets and the exploitation of helpless populations. Again, when we rely upon the disturbance of organised national and international life as a preventive of war, we forget the boundless power of self-adaptation which man possesses; that power has been shown strikingly enough in the skill and ease with which the organisation and finance of peace were replaced in the present crisis by the organisation and finance of war. And when we rely upon Science to make war impossible, we forget that the progress of Science means a series of surprises and that it means also a constant effort of human ingenuity to overcome impossibilities and find fresh means of satisfying our ideas, desires and instincts. Science may well make war of the present type with shot and shell and mines and battleships an impossibility and yet develop or leave in their place other and simpler means which may bring back the type of ancient warfare.

So long as war does not become psychologically impossible, it will remain or, if banished for a while, return. War itself, it is hoped will end war; the expense, the horror, the butchery, the disturbance of tranquil life, the whole confused sanguinary madness of the thing has reached or will reach such colossal proportions that the human race will fling the monstrosity behind it in weariness and disgust. But weariness and disgust, horror

and pity, even the opening of the eyes to reason by the practical facts of the waste of human life and energy and the harm and extravagance are not permanent factors; they last only while the lesson is fresh. Afterwards, there is forgetfulness; human nature recuperates itself and recovers the instincts that were temporarily dominated. A long peace, even a certain organisation of peace, may conceivably result, but so long as the heart of man remains what it is, the peace will come to an end; the organisation will break down under the stress of human passions. War is no longer, perhaps, a biological necessity; what is within us, must manifest itself outside.

Meanwhile it is well that every false hope and confident prediction should be answered as soon as may well be by the irony of the gods; for only so can we be driven to the perception of the real remedy. Only when man has developed not merely a fellow-feeling with all men, but a dominant sense of unity and commonalty, only when he is aware of them not merely as brothers,—that is a fragile bond,—but as parts of himself, only when he has learned to live, not in his separate personal and communal ego-sense, but in a large universal consciousness, can the phenomenon of war, with whatever weapons, pass out of his life without the possibility of return. Meanwhile that he should struggle even by illusions towards that end, is an excellent sign; for it shows that the truth behind the illusion is pressing towards the hour when it may become manifest as reality.

THE UNSEEN POWER

A war has ended, a world has perished in the realm of thought and begun to disappear in the order of outward Nature. The war that has ended, was fought in physical trenches, with shell and shot, with machine-gun and tank and aeroplane, with mangling of limbs and crash of physical edifices and rude uptearing of the bosom of our mother earth; the new war, or the old continued in another form, that is already beginning, will be fought more with mental trenches and bomb-proof shelters, with reconnaissances and batteries and moving machines of thought and word, propaganda and parties and programmes, with mangling of the desire-souls of men and of nations, crash of many kinds of thrones and high-built institutions and strong uptearing of the old earth of custom which man has formed as a layer over the restless molten forces of evolutionary Nature. The old world that is shaken outwardly in its bases and already crumbling in some of its parts, is the economical and materialistic civilisation which mankind has been forming for the last few centuries from once new materials now growing rapidly effete pieced out with broken remnants of antiquity and the middle ages. The period of military conflict just at an end came to breach that which thought had already been sapping, an era of revolutions has opened which is likely to complete the ruin and prepare the building of a new structure.

In this struggle the question arises to the thinking man what Power or what Powers are expressing their will or their strivings in this upheaval ? and we, what power or powers shall we serve ? to what thing inward or superhuman, since outward thrones and systems are but as leaves driven before the storm-wind of the breath of Time, shall we owe allegiance ? what or whom is it that we shall fight to enthrone ?

Men fight for their personal or communal or national interests or for ideas and principles of which they make watchwords and battle-cries. But the largest human interests are only means and instruments which some Force greater than themselves breaks or uses in its incontinent impulse or else for its conscious purposes ; ideas and principles are births of our minds which are born, reign and pass away and they are mere words unless they express some power of our being and of world-being which finds in them a mental self-expression. Something there is greater than our thoughts and desires, something more constant and insistent which lasts and grows beyond and yet by their changings. If no such thing were, then all this human effort would be a vain perturbation, the life of man only the busy instinctive routine of the hive and the ant-hill on a little higher scale, but with more useless suffering in it and less economy and wisdom, and our thought a vain glittering of imaginations weaving out involuntarily a web like that of old legend that is spun and respun only to be undone and again undone and of reasonings

that build a series of intellectual and practical conventions which we represent to ourselves as the truth and the right, making the fallacies of our minds a substitute for wisdom and the fallacies of our social living a substitute for happiness. For this is certain that nothing we form and no outward system we create can last beyond its appointed or else its possible time. As this great materialistic civilisation of Europe to which the high glowing dawn of the Renaissance gave its brilliant birth and the dry brazen afternoon of nineteenth-century rationalism its hard maturity, is passing away and the bosom of earth and the soul of man heave a sigh of relief at its going, so whatever new civilisation we construct after this evening of the cycle, *yuga-sandhya*, on which we are entering,—for those are surely mistaken who think it is already the true dawn,—will also live its time and collapse fiercely or decay dully,—unless indeed there is that eternal Spirit in things and he should have found in its key-note the first sounds of the strain of his real harmony, in which case it may be the first of an ascending series of changes to the creation of a greater humanity. Otherwise, all this vast clash and onset of peoples and world-wide bloodshed would be only a fortuitous nightmare, and the happiest known age of nation or mankind only the pleasant dream of a moment. Then the old-world gospel which bade us look upon human life as a vanity of vanities, would be the only wisdom.

But with that creed the soul of man has never remained

contented and still less can we at the present day live in it, because this intuition of a greater Power than our apparent selves in the workings of the world is now growing upon the race and the vast sense of an unaccomplished aim in the urge of life is driving it to an unprecedented effort of human thought and energy. In such a moment even the hugest calamities cannot exhaust the life or discourage its impetus, but rather impel it to a new elan of endeavour ; for the flames of thought rise higher than the flames of the conflagration that destroys and see in it a meaning and the promise of a new creation. In the destruction that has been effected, in the void that has been left, the mind sees only more room for hope to grow and a wide space that the Spirit who builds in Time has cleared for his new structure. For who that has eyes at all to see cannot see this, that in what has happened, immense Powers have been at work which nourish a vaster world-purpose than the egoistic mind of individual or nation could mete with their yard-measure of narrow personal idea or communal interest and for which the motives and passions of governments and peoples were only tools or opportunities ? When the autocrats and the war-lords of the east and the centre resolved to dare this huge catastrophe in order to seize from it the crown of their ambitions, when they drove madly to the precipice of an incalculable world-conflict, they could have no inkling that within four years or less their thrones would have fallen, themselves be slain or flee into exile and all for which they

stood be hastening into the night of the past ; only that which impelled them foresaw and intended it. Nor were the peoples who staggered unwillingly over the brink of war, more enlightened of the secret purpose : defence of what they were and possessed, wrath at a monstrous aggression which was a menace to their ordered European civilisation, drove their will and inflamed their resolution. Yet to convict that civilisation of error and prepare another era of humanity was the intention of the Force that has given them victory, its voice echoed confusedly in their thought and growing clearer in the minds of those who entered later with a deliberate and conscious will into the struggle.

Great has been the havoc and ruin, immense the suffering, thick the blood-red cloud of darkness enveloping the world, heavy the toll of life, bottomless the expenditure of treasure and human resources, and all has not yet been worked out, the whole price has not yet been paid ; for the after effects of the war are likely to be much greater than its present effects, and much that by an effort of concentration has resisted the full shock of the earthquake, will fall in the after-tremblings. Well might the mind of a man during the calamity, aware of the Power that stood over the world wrapped in this tempest, repeat the words of Arjuna on the field of Kurukshetra,—

*drishtvâdbhutam rūpam ugram tavedam
lokatrayam pravyathitam mahātman...*

*drishtvâ hi twâm pravyathitântarâtma
 dhritim na vindâmi caman cha vishno...
 yathâ nadinâm bahavo 'mbuvegâh
 samudram evâbhimukhâ dravanti,
 tathâ tavâmi nara-loka-vîrâh
 vicanti vaktrânyabhivijvalanti,
 yathâ pradîptam jvalanam patangû
 vicanti nâcâya samriddhavegâh
 tathaiva nacaya vicanti lokâs
 tavâpi vaktrâni samriddhavegâh,
 lelihyase grasâmânah samantâl
 lokân samagrân vadanair jvaladbhih,
 tejoblur âpûrya jagat samagram
 bhâsas tavogrâh pratapanti vishno
 âkhyâhi me ko bhavân ugrarûpo
 namo's stu te devavara prasîda,
 vijnâtum ichchhâmi bhavantam âdyam
 na hi prajânâmi tava pravrittîm.*

"When is seen this Thy fierce and, astounding form,
 the three worlds are all in pain and suffer, O Thou mighty
 spirit.... Troubled and in anguish is the soul within me
 as I look upon Thee and I find no peace or gladness. As
 is the speed of many rushing waters racing towards the
 ocean, so all these heroes of the world of men are entering
 into Thy many mouths of flame. As a swarm of moths
 with ever-increasing speed fall to their destruction into
 a fire that some one has kindled, so now the nations with
 ever-increasing speed are entering into Thy jaws of doom.

Thou lickest the regions all around with Thy tongues and Thou art swallowing up all the nations in Thy mouths of burning ; all the world is filled with the blaze of Thy energies ; fierce and terrible are Thy lustres and they burn us, O Vishnu. Declare to me who art Thou that comest to us in this form of fierceness ; salutation to Thee, O Thou great godhead, turn Thy heart to grace. I would know who art Thou who wast from the beginning, for I know not the will of Thy workings."

If the first answer might seem to come in the same words that answered the appeal of Arjuna, "I am the Time-Spirit, destroyer of the world, arisen huge-statured for the destruction of the nations."

*kūlo' smi loka-kshaya-kṛit pravṛiddho
lokân samâhartum iha pravṛittha,*

and the voice the same to those who would shrink back hesitating from participation in the devastating struggle and massacre, "Even without thee all these shall cease to be, who stand in the opposing hosts, for already have I slain them in my foreseeing will ; know thyself to be an instrument only of an end predestined,"—still in the end it is the Friend of man, the Charioteer of his battle and his journey who appears in the place of the form of destruction and the outcome of all the ruin is the *dharma*rajya, the kingdom of the Dharma. To humanity as to the warrior of Kurukshetra the concluding message has been uttered, "Therefore arise,

destroy the foe, enjoy a rich and happy kingdom." But the kingdom of what Dharma? It is doubtful enough whether as the nations were blind to the nature of the destruction that was coming, they may not be at least purblind to the nature of the construction that is to be created. An increase of mechanical freedom to be lavished or doled out according to the needs, interests, hesitations of the old-world forces that still remain erect, a union effected by a patch-work of the remnants of the past and the unshaped materials of the future, a credit and debit account with fate writing off so much of the evil and error of the past as can no longer be kept and writing up as good capital,—with some diminutions by way of acquitment of conscience, part payment of overdue debts,—all that has not been hopelessly destroyed, an acceptance of the change already effected by the tempest or made immediately inevitable and a new system of embankments to prevent the further encroachments of the flood, is not likely to put a successful term to the cataclysm. Even if a short-sighted sagacity could bring this about for a time by a combined effort of successful and organised egoisms making terms with the powerful Idea-forces that are abroad as the messengers of the Time-Spirit, still it would be only an artificial check leading to a new upheaval in the not distant future. A liquidation of the old bankrupt materialistic economism which will enable it to set up business again under a new name with a reserve capital and a clean ledger, will be a futile attempt to cheat destiny. Commercialism

has no doubt its own Dharma, its ideal of utilitarian justice and law and adjustment, its civilisation presided over by the sign of the Balance, and its old measures being now annulled, it is eager enough to start afresh with a new system of calculated values. But a *dharma-rajya* of the half-penitent Vaishya is not to be the final consummation of a time like ours pregnant with new revelations of thought and spirit and new creations in life, nor is a golden or rather a copper-gilt age of the sign of the Balance to be the glorious reward of this anguish and travail of humanity. It is surely the kingdom of another and higher Dharma that is in preparation.

What that Dharma is we can only know if we know this Power whose being and whose thought are at work behind all that we attempt and suffer, conceive and strive for. A former humanity conceived of it as a creative Divinity or almighty Power high above man and his being and his effort or of a pantheon or hierarchy of universal Powers who looked upon and swayed the labour and passion and thought of the race. But the system of cosmic deities lacked a base and a principle of unity in their workings and above it the ancients were obliged to conceive of a vague and ineffable Divinity, the unknown God to whom they built a nameless altar, or a Necessity with face of sphinx and hands of bronze to whom the gods themselves had to give an ignorant obedience, and it left the life of man at once the victim of an inscrutable fate and the puppet of superhuman caprices. That to a great extent he is, so long as he lives

in his vital ego and is the servant of his own personal ideas and passions. Later religions gave a name and some body of form and quality to the one unknown Godhead and proclaimed an ideal law which they gave out as his word and scripture. But the dogmatism of a partial and unlived knowledge and the external tendencies of the human mind darkened the illuminations of religion with the confusions of error and threw over its face strange masks of childish and cruel superstitions. Religion too by putting God far above in distant heavens made man too much of a worm of the earth; little and vile before his Creator and admitted only by a caprice of his favour to a doubtful salvation in superhuman worlds. Modern thought seeking to make a clear riddance of these past conceptions had to substitute something else in its place, and what it saw and put there was the material law of Nature and the biological law of life of which human reason was to be the faithful exponent and human science the productive utiliser and profiteer. But to apply the mechanical blindness of the rule of physical Nature as the sole guide of thinking and seeing man is to go against the diviner law of his being and maim his higher potentiality. Material and vital Nature is only a first form of our being and to overcome and rise beyond its formula is the very sense of a human evolution. Another and greater Power than hers is the master of this effort, and human reason or human science is not that Godhead, but can only be at best one and not the greatest of its ministers. It is not human

reason and human science which have been working out their ends in or through the tempest that has laid low so many of their constructions. A greater Spirit awaits a deeper questioning to reveal his unseen form and his hidden purpose.

Something of this truth we have begun to see dimly, in the return to more spiritual notions and in the idea of a kingdom of God to be built in the life of humanity. On the old sense of a Power in the universe of which the world that we live in is the field, is supervening the nearer perception of a Godhead in man, the unseen king of whom the outer man is the veil and of whom our mind and life can be the servants and living instruments and our perfected souls the clear mirrors. But we have to see more lucidly and in the whole before we can know this Godhead. There are three powers and forms in which the Being who is at work in things presents himself to our vision. There is first the form of him that we behold in the universe, but that, or at least what we see of it in the appearances of things, is not the whole truth of him; it is indeed only a first material shape and vital foundation which he has offered for the starting-point of our growth, an initial sum of preliminary realisations from which we have to proceed and to transcend them. The next form is that of which man alone here has the secret, for in him it is progressively revealing itself in a partial and always incomplete accomplishing and unfolding. His thoughts, his ideals, his dreams, his attempts at a high self-exceeding are the clues by which he attempts to

discover the Spirit, the moulds in which he tries to seize the form of the Divinity. But they too are only a partial light and not the whole form of the Godhead. Something waits beyond which the human mind approaches in a shapeless aspiration to an ineffable Perfection, an infinite Light, an infinite Power, an infinite Love, a universal Good and Beauty. This is not something that is not yet in perfect being, a God who is becoming or who has to be created by man; it is the Eternal of whom this infinite ideal is a mental reflection. It is beyond the form of the universe and these psychological realisations of the human being and yet it is here too in man and subsists surrounding him in all the powers of the world he lives in. It is both the Spirit who is in the universe and the invisible king in man who is the master of his works. It develops in the universe through laws which are not complete here or not filled in in their sense and action until humanity shall have fully evolved in its nature the potentialities of the mind and spirit. It works in man, but through his individual and corporate ego so long as he dwells within the knot of his present mentality. Only when his race knows God and lives in the Divine, will the ideal sense of his strivings begin to unfold itself and the kingdom be founded, *rajyam samridham*.

When we try to build our outer life in obedience to our ego, our interests, our passions or our vital needs only or else in a form of our vital needs served and enlarged by our intellect, but not enlightened with a greater spiritual meaning, we are living within the law of the first cosmic

formulation. It is as insistent Rudra that the unseen Power meets us there, the Master of the evolution, the Lord of Karma, the King of justice and judgment, who is easily placated with sacrifice and effort, for even to the Asura and Rakshasa, the Titan and the giant he gives the fruit of their *tapasya*, but who is swift also to wrath and every time that man offends against the law, even though it be in ignorance, or stands stiff in his ego against the urge of the evolution or provokes the rebound of Karma, he strikes without mercy; through strife and stumblings, through passioning and yearning and fierce stress of will and giant endeavour, construction and destruction, slow labour of evolution and rushing speed of revolution Rudra works out the divine purpose. When on the contrary we seek to shape our life by the Ideal, it is the severe Lord of Truth who meets us with his questioning. Then in so far as we work in the sincerity of the inner truth, we shall live in an increasing harmony of the result of a divine working. But if the measures of our ideal are false or if we cast into the balance the unjust weight of our egoism and hypocrisy and self-deceiving or if we misuse the truth for our narrower ends, if we turn it into a lie or a convention or an outward machinery without the living soul of the truth in it, then we must pay a heavy reckoning. For as before we fell into the terrible hand of Rudra so now we fall into the subtler more dangerous noose of Varuna. Only if we can see the Truth and live in it, shall our aspiration be satisfied. Then it is the master of Freedom, the Lord of Love, the Spirit of unity who shall

inform the soul of the individual and take up the world's endeavour. He is the great Liberator and the strong and gentle founder of Perfection.

It is the wrath of Rudra that has swept over the earth and the track of his foot-prints can be seen in these ruins. There has come as a result upon the race the sense of having lived in many falsehoods and the need of building according to an ideal. Therefore we have now to meet the question of the Master of Truth. Two great words of the divine Truth have forced themselves insistently on our minds through the crash of the ruin and the breath of the tempest and are now the leading words of the hoped-for reconstruction,—freedom and unity. But everything depends, first, upon the truth of our vision of them, secondly, upon the sincerity with which we apply it, last and especially on the inwardness of our realisation. Vain will be the mechanical construction of unity, if unity is not in the heart of the race and if it be made only a means for safeguarding and organising our interests; the result will then be only, as it was in the immediate past, a fiercer strife and new outbreaks of revolution and anarchy. No paltering mechanisms which have the appearance but not the truth of freedom, will help us; the new structure, however imposing, will only become another prison and compel a fresh struggle for liberation. The one safety for man lies in learning to live from within outward, not depending on institutions and machinery to perfect him, but out of his growing inner perfection availing to shape a more perfect form and frame

of life; for by this inwardness we shall best be able both to see the truth of the high things which we now only speak with our lips and form into outward intellectual constructions, and to apply their truth sincerely to all our outward living. If we are to found the kingdom of God in humanity, we must first know God and see and live the diviner truth of our being in ourselves; otherwise how shall a new manipulation of the constructions of the reason and scientific systems of efficiency which have failed us in the past, avail to establish it? It is because there are plenty of signs that the old error continues and only a minority, leaders perhaps in light, but not yet in action, are striving to see more clearly, inwardly and truly, that we must expect as yet rather the last twilight which divides the dying from the unborn age than the real dawning. For a time, since the mind of man is not yet ready, the old spirit and method may yet be strong and seem for a short while to prosper; but the future lies with the men and nations who first see beyond both the glare and the dusk the gods of the morning and prepare themselves to be fit instruments of the Power that is pressing towards the light of a greater ideal.

SELF-DETERMINATION

A new phrase has recently been cast out from the blood-stained yeast of war into the shifty language of politics,—that strange language full of Maya and falsities, of self-illusion and deliberate delusion of others, which almost immediately turns all true and vivid phrases into a jargon, so that men may fight in a cloud of words without any clear sense of the thing they are battling for,—it is the luminous description of liberty as the just power, the freely exercised right of self-determination. The word is in itself a happy discovery, a thought-sign of real usefulness. For it helps to make definite and manageable what was apt till now to be splendidly vague and nebulous. Its invention is a sign at once of a growing clarity of conception about this great good which man has been striving to achieve for himself through the centuries, as yet without any satisfying success to boast of anywhere, and of the increasing subjectivity of our ideas about life. This clarity and this subjectivity must indeed go together; for we can only get good hold of the right end of the great ideas which should govern our ways of living when we begin to understand that their healthful process is from within outward, and that the opposite method, the mechanical, ends always by turning living realities into formal conventions. No doubt, to man the animal the mechanical alone seems to be real;

but to man the soul, man the thinker through whom we arrive at our inner manhood, only that is true which he can feel as a truth within him and feel without as his self-expression. All else is a deceptive charlatanry, an acceptance of shows for truths, of external appearances for realities, which are so many devices to keep him in bondage.

Liberty in one shape or another ranks among the most ancient and certainly among the most difficult aspirations of our race: it arises from a radical instinct of our being and is yet opposed to all our circumstances; it is our eternal good and our condition of perfection, but our temporal being has failed to find its key. That perhaps is because true freedom is only possible if we live in the infinite, live, as the Vedanta bids us, in and from our self-existent being; but our natural and temporal energies seek for it at first not in ourselves, but in our external conditions. This great indefinable thing, liberty, is in its highest and ultimate sense a state of being; it is self living in itself and determining by its own energy what it shall be inwardly and, eventually, by the growth of a divine spiritual power within determining too what it shall make of its external circumstances and environment; that is the largest and freest sense of self-determination. But when we start from the natural and temporal life, what we practically come to mean by liberty is a convenient elbow-room for our natural energies to satisfy themselves without being too much impinged upon by the self-assertiveness of others. And that is a difficult problem

to solve, because the liberty of one, immediately it begins to act, knocks up fatally against the liberty of another; the free running of many in the same field means a free chaos of collisions. That was at one time glorified under the name of the competitive system, and dissatisfaction with its results has led to the opposite idea of State socialism, which supposes that the negation of individual liberty in the collective being of the State can be made to amount by some mechanical process to a positive sum of liberty nicely distributable to all in a carefully guarded equality. The individual gives up his freedom of action and possession to the State which in return doles out to him a regulated liberty, let us say, a sufficient elbow-room so parcelled out that he shall not at all butt into the ribs of his neighbour. It is admirable in theory, logically quite unexceptionable, but in practice, one suspects, it would amount to a very oppressive, because a very mechanical slavery of the individual to the community, or rather to something indefinite that calls itself the community.

Experience has so far shown us that the human attempt to arrive at a mechanical freedom has only resulted in a very relative liberty and even that has been enjoyed for the most part by some at the expense of others. It has amounted usually to the rule of the majority by a minority, and many strange things have been done in its name. Ancient liberty and democracy meant in Greece the self-rule—variegated by periodical orgies of mutual throat-cutting—of a smaller number of free men of all

ranks who lived by the labour of a great mass of slaves. In recent times liberty and democracy have been, and still are, a cant assertion which veils under a skilfully moderated plutocratic system the rule of an organised successful bourgeoisie over a proletariat at first submissive, afterwards increasingly dissatisfied and combined for recalcitrant self-assertion. The earliest use of liberty and democracy by the emancipated proletariat has been the crude forceful tyranny of an ill-organised labour oligarchy over a quite disorganised peasantry and an impotently recalcitrant bourgeoisie. And just as the glorious possession of liberty by the community has been held to be consistent with the oppression of four-fifths or three-fifths of the population by the remaining fraction, so it has till lately been held to be quite consistent with the complete subjection of one half of mankind, the woman half, to the physically stronger male. The series continues through a whole volume of anomalies, including of course the gloriously beneficent and profitable exploitation of subject peoples by emancipated nations who, it seems, are entitled to that domination by their priesthood of the sacred cult of freedom. They mean no doubt to extend it to the exploited at some distant date, but take care meanwhile to pay themselves the full price of their holy office before they deliver the article. Even the best machinery of this mechanical freedom yet discovered amounts to the unmodified will of a bare majority, or rather to its selection of a body of rulers who coerce in its name all minorities and lead

it to issues of which it has itself no clear perception.

These anomalies,—anomalies of many kinds are inseparable from the mechanical method,—are a sign that the real meaning of liberty has not yet been understood. Nevertheless the aspiration and the effort itself towards the realisation of a great idea cannot fail to bear some fruit, and modern liberty and democracy, however imperfect and relative, have had this result that for the communities which have followed them, they have removed the pressure of the more obvious, outward and aggressive forms of oppression and domination which were inherent in the systems of the past. They have made life a little more tolerable for the mass, and if they have not yet made life free, they have at least given more liberty to thought and to the effort to embody a freer thought in a more adequate form of life. This larger space for the thought in man and its workings was the necessary condition for a growing clarity which must enlighten in the end the crude conceptions with which the race has started and refine the crude methods and forms in which it has embodied them. The attempt to govern life by an increasing light of thought rather than allow the rough and imperfect actualities of life to govern and to limit the mind is a distinct sign of advance in human progress. But the true turning-point will come with the farther step which initiates the attempt to govern life by that of which thought itself is only a sign and an instrument, the soul, the inner being, and to make our ways of living a freer opportunity for the growing height

and breadth of its need of self-fulfilment. That is the real, the profounder sense which we shall have to learn to attach to the idea of self-determination as the effective principle of liberty.

The principle of self-determination really means this that within every living human creature, man, woman and child, and equally within every distinct human collectivity growing or grown, half developed or adult there is a self, a being, which has the right to grow in its own way, to find itself, to make its life a full and a satisfied instrument and image of its being. This is the first principle which must contain and overtop all others; the rest is a question of conditions, means, expedients, accommodations, opportunities, capacities, limitations, none of which must be allowed to abrogate the sovereignty of the first essential principle. But it can only prevail if it is understood with a right idea of this Self and its needs and claims. The first danger to the principle of self-determination, as to all others, is that it may be interpreted, like most of the ideals of our human existence in the past, in the light of the ego, its interests and its will towards self-satisfaction. So interpreted it will carry us no farther than before; we shall arrive at a point where our principle is brought up short, fails us, turns into a false or a half-true assertion of the mind and a convention of form which covers realities that are quite the opposite of itself.

For the ego has inalienably the instinct of a double self-assertion, its self-assertion against other egos and its

self-assertion by means of other egos; in all its expansion it is impelled to subordinate their need to its own, to use them for its own purpose and for that purpose to establish some kind of control or domination or property in what it uses, whether by force or by dexterity, openly or covertly, by absorption or by some skilful turn of exploitation. Human lives cannot run upon free parallels; for they are compelled by Nature continually to meet, impinge on each other, intermix, and in the ego life that means always a clash. The first idea of our reason suggests that our human relations may be subjected to a mechanical accommodation of interests which will get rid of the clash and the strife; but this can only be done up to a certain point: at best we diminish some of the violence and crude obviousness of the clashing and the friction and give them a more subtle and less grossly perceptible form. Within that subtler form the principle of strife and exploitation continues; for always the egoistic instinct must be to use the accommodations to which it is obliged or induced to assent, as far as possible for its own advantage, and it is only limited in this impulse by the limits of its strength and capacity, by the sense of expediency and consequence, by the perception of some necessity for respecting other egoisms in order that its own egoism too may be respected. But these considerations can only tone down or hedge in the desire of a gross or a subtle domination and exploitation of others; they do not abrogate it.

The human mind has resorted to ethics as a corrective;

but the first laws of ethical conduct also succeed at best in checking only the egoistic rule of life and do not overcome it. Therefore the ethical idea has pushed itself forward into the other and opposite principle of altruism. The main general results have been a clearer perception of collective egoisms and their claim on the individual egoism and, secondly, a quite uncertain and indefinable mixture, strife and balancing of egoistic and altruistic motives in our conduct. Often enough altruism is there chiefly in profession or at best a quite superficial will which does not belong to the centre of our action ; it becomes then either a deliberate or else a half-conscious camouflage by which egoism masks itself and gets at its object without being suspected. But even a sincere altruism hides within itself the ego, and to be able to discover the amount of it hidden up in our most benevolent or even self-sacrificing actions is the acid test of sincere self-introspection, nor can anyone really quite know himself who has not made ruthlessly this often painful analysis. It could not be otherwise ; for the law of life cannot be self-immolation ; self-sacrifice can only be a step in self-fulfilment. Nor can life be in its nature a one-sided self-giving ; all giving must contain in itself some measure of receiving to have any fruitful value or significance. Altruism itself is more important even by the good it does to ourselves than by the good it does to others ; for the latter is often problematical, but the former is certain, and its good consists in the growth of self, in an inner self-heightening and self-

expansion. Not then any general law of altruism, but rather a self-recognition based upon mutual recognition must be the broad rule of our human relations. Life is self-fulfilment which moves upon a ground of mutuality ; it involves a mutual use of one by the other, in the end of all by all. The whole question is whether this shall be done on the lower basis of the ego attended by strife, friction and collision with whatever checks and controls, or whether it cannot be done by a higher law of our being which shall discover a means of reconciliation, free reciprocity and unity.

A right idea of the rule of self-determination may help to set us on the way to the discovery of this higher law. For we may note that this phrase self-determination reconciles and brings together in one complex notion the idea of liberty and the idea of law. These two powers of being tend in our first conceptions, as in the first appearances of life itself, to be opposed to each other as rivals or enemies ; we find therefore ranged against each other the champions of law and order and the defenders of liberty. There is the ideal which sets order first and liberty either nowhere or in an inferior category, because it is willing to accept any coercion of liberty which will maintain the mechanical stability of order ; and there is the ideal which on the contrary sets liberty first and regards law either as a hostile compression or a temporarily necessary evil or at best a means of securing liberty by guarding against any violent and aggressive interference with it as between man and man.

This use of law as a means of liberty may be advocated only in a minimum reducible to the just quantity necessary for its purpose, the individualistic idea of the matter, or raised to a maximum as in the socialistic idea that the largest sum of regulation will total up to or at least lead up to or secure the largest sum of freedom. We have continually too the most curious mixing up of the two ideas, as in the old-time claim of the capitalist to prevent the freedom of labour to organise so that the liberty of contract might be preserved, or in the singular sophistical contention of the Indian defenders of orthodox caste rigidity on its economical side that coercion of a man to follow his ancestral profession in disregard not only of his inclinations, but of his natural tendencies and aptitudes is a securing to the individual of his natural right, his freedom to follow his hereditary nature. We see a similar confusion of ideas in the claim of European statesman to train Asiatic or African peoples to liberty, which means in fact to teach them in the beginning liberty in the school of subjection and afterwards to compel them at each stage in the progress of a mechanical self-government to satisfy the tests and notions imposed on them by an alien being and consciousness instead of developing freely a type and law of their own. The right idea of self-determination makes a clean sweep of these confusions. It makes it clear that liberty should proceed by the development of the law of one's own being determined from within, evolving out of oneself and not determined from outside by the

idea and will of another. There remains the problem of relations, of the individual and the collective self-determination and of the interaction of the self-determination of one on the self-determination of another. That cannot be finally settled by any mechanical solution, but only by the discovery of some meeting-place of the law of our self-determination with the common law of mutuality, where they begin to become one. It signifies in fact the discovery of an inner and larger self other than the mere ego, in which our individual self-fulfilment no longer separates us from others but at each step of our growth calls for an increasing unity.

But it is from the self-determination of the free individual within the free collectivity in which he lives that we have to start, because so only can we be sure of a healthy growth of freedom and because too the unity to be arrived at is that of individuals growing freely towards perfection and not of human machines working in regulated unison or of souls suppressed, mutilated and cut into one or more fixed geometrical patterns. The moment we sincerely accept this idea, we have to travel altogether away from the old notion of the right of property of man in man which still lurks in the human mind where it does not possess it. The trail of this notion is all over our past, the right of property of the father over the child, of the man over the woman, of the ruler or the ruling class or power over the ruled, of the State over the individual. The child was in the ancient patriarchal idea the live property of the father;

he was his creation, his production, his own reproduction of himself; the father, rather than God or the universal Life or in place of God, stood as the author of the child's being; and the creator has every right over his creation, the producer over his manufacture. He had the right to make of him what he willed, and not what the being of the child really was within, to train and shape and cut him according to the parental ideas and not rear him according to his own nature's deepest needs, to bind him to the paternal career or the career chosen by the parent and not that to which his nature and capacity and inclination pointed, to fix for him all the critical turning-points of his life even after he had reached maturity. In education the child was regarded not as a soul meant to grow, but as brute psychological stuff to be shaped into a fixed mould by the teacher. We have travelled to another conception of the child as a soul with a being, a nature and capacities of his own who must be helped to find them, to find himself, to grow into their maturity, into a fullness of physical and vital energy and the utmost breadth, depth, and height of his emotional, his intellectual and his spiritual being. So too the subjection, of woman, the property of the man over the woman, was once an axiom of social life and has only in recent times been effectively challenged. So strong was or had become the instinct of this domination in the male animal man, that even religion and philosophy have had to sanction it, very much in that formula in which Milton expresses the height of

masculine egoism, "He for God only, she for God in him," —if not actually indeed for him in the place of God. This idea too is crumbling into the dust, though its remnants still cling to life by many strong tentacles of old legislation, continued instinct, persistence of traditional ideas; the fiat has gone out against it in the claim of woman to be regarded, she too, as a free individual being. The right of property of the rulers in the ruled has perished by the advance of liberty and democracy; in the form of national imperialism it still indeed persists, though more now by commercial greed than by the instinct of political domination; intellectually this form too of possessional egoism has received its death-blow, vitally it still endures. The right of property of the State in the individual which threatened to take the place of all these, has now had its real spiritual consequence thrown into relief by the lurid light of the war, and we may hope that its menace to human liberty will be diminished by this clearer knowledge. We are at least advancing to a point at which it may be possible to make the principle of self-determination a present and pressing, if not yet an altogether dominant force in the whole shaping of human life.

Self-determination viewed from this subjective standpoint carries us back at once towards the old spiritual idea of the Being within, whose action, once known and self-revealed, is not an obedience to external and mechanical impulses, but proceeds in each from the powers of the soul, an action self-determined by the essential

quality and principle of which all our becoming is the apparent movement, *swabhavanīyatam karma*. But it is only as we rise higher and higher in ourselves and find out our true self and its true powers that we can get at the full truth of this swabhava. Our present existence is at the most a growth towards it and therefore an imperfection, and its chief imperfection is the individual's egoistic idea of self which reappears enlarged in the collective egoism. Therefore an egoistic self-determination or a modified individualism, is not the true solution; if that were all, we could never get beyond a balance and, in progress, a zigzag of conflict and accommodation. The ego is not the true circle of the self; the law of mutuality which meets it at every turn and which it misuses, arises from the truth that there is a secret unity between our self and the self of others and therefore between our own lives and the lives of others. The law of our self-determination has to wed itself to the self-determination of others and to find the way to enact a real union through this mutuality. But its basis can only be found within and not through any mechanical adjustment. It lies in the discovery within by the being in the course of its self-expansion and self-fulfilment that these things at every turn depend on the self-expansion and self-fulfilment of those around us, because we are secretly one being with them and one life. It is in philosophical language the recognition of the one self in all who fulfils himself variously in each; it is the finding of the law of the divine being in each unifying itself with the law

of the divine being in all. At once the key of the problem is shifted from without to within, from the visible externalities of social and political adjustment to the spiritual life and truth which can alone provide its key.

Not that the outer life has to be neglected; on the contrary the pursual of the principle in one field or on one level, provided we do not limit or fix ourselves in it, helps its disclosure in other fields and upon other levels. Still if we have not the unity within, it is in vain that we shall try to enforce it from without by law and compulsion or by any assertion in outward forms. Intellectual assertion too, like the mechanical, is insufficient; only the spiritual can give it, because it alone has the secure power of realisation. The ancient truth of the self is the eternal truth; we have to go back upon it in order to carry it out in newer and fuller ways for which a past humanity was not ready. The recognition and fulfilment of the divine being in oneself and in man, the kingdom of God within and in the race is the basis on which man must come in the end to the possession of himself as a free self-determining being and of mankind too in a mutually possessing self-expansion as a harmoniously self-determining united existence.

A LEAGUE OF NATIONS

Ancient tradition believed in a golden age of mankind which lay in the splendid infancy of a primeval past; it looked back to some type or symbol of original perfection Saturnian epoch, Satya Yuga, an age of sincere being and free unity when the sons of heaven were leaders of the human life and mind and the law of God was written, not in ineffective books, but on the tablets of man's heart. Then he needed no violence of outer law or government to restrain him from evil or to cut and force his free being into the machine-made procrustean mould of a social ideal; for a natural divine rule in his members was the spontaneous and sufficient safeguard of his liberty. This tradition was once so universal that one might almost be tempted to see in it the race memory of some golden and splendid realisation, not perhaps a miraculous divine beginning, but some past spiral cusp and apex, some topmost gloriously mounting arc of the cycles,—if there were not the equal chance of its being no more than a heightened example of that very common ideally retrospective tendency in the human mind which glorifies the past out of all perspective or proportion, blots out its shadows and sees it in some haze or deceiving light against the dark immediate shadow of the present, or else a projection from his sense of the something divine, pure and perfect within him from which he has fallen, placed

by symbolic legend not in the eternal but in time, not inwardly in his spiritual being, but outwardly in his obscure existence on this crude and transient crust of Earth. What concerns us more is that we find often associated with this memory or this backward-looking illusion, a vague hope far or near, or even a more precise prophetic or religious forward-looking tradition of a coming back to us of that golden perfection, *Astraea redux*, *Saturnia regna*,—let us say, a return from the falling line of the cycle to another similar, perhaps even greater high-glowing cusp and apex. Thus in the human mind which looks always before and after, its great dream of the ideal past completed itself by a greater dream of the ideal future.

These things modern man with his scientific and secularised mentality finds it difficult to believe in unless he has first theosophised or mysticised himself into a fine freedom from the positive scientific intelligence. Science which traces so confidently the nobly complete and astonishing evolution of our race in a fairly swift straight line from the ape man to the dazzlingly unfixable brilliancy of Mr. Lloyd George and the dyspeptic greatness of Rockefeller, rejects the old traditions as dreams and poetic figments. But to recompense us for our loss it has given us instead a more practicable, persistent and immediate vision of modern progress and the future hope of a rational and mechanically perfectible society: that is the one real religion still left, the new Jerusalem of the modern creed of a positivist sociology. The ideal past

has lost its glamour, but a sober glamour of the future is brought near to us and takes on to the constructive human reason a closer hue of reality. The Asiatic mind is indeed still incurably prone to the older type of imagination which took and still takes so many inspiring forms, second coming of Christ, City of God, the Divine Family, advent of Messiah, Mahdi or Avatar,—but whatever the variety of the form, the essence is the same, a religious or spiritual idealisation of a possible future humanity. The European temperament—and we are all trying to become for the moment, superficially at least, white, brown, yellow or black Europeans,—demands something more familiarly terrestrial and tangible, a secular, social, political dream of evolving humanity, a perfected democracy, socialism, communism, anarchism. But whichever line we take and whether it be truth or illusion, the thing behind is the same and would seem to be a necessity of our human mind and will to action. We cannot do without some kind of futurist idealism. Something we must labour to build individually and collectively out of ourselves and our life, unless we would be content with the commonness and stumbling routine of a half made and half animal manhood,—a self-dethronement to which that which is greatest in us will never consent,—and man cannot build greatly whether in art or life, unless he can conceive an idea and form of perfection and, conceiving, believe in his power to achieve it out of however rebellious and unductile a stuff of nature. Deprive him of this faith in his power for perfection and you slay or maim his greatest

creative or self-creative faculty. In the absence then of any immediate practicability of that higher and profounder dream of a spiritually united and perfected humanity, the dream of social and political meliorism may be accepted as the strongest available incentive to keep humanity going forward. It is better that it should have the ideal of a saving machinery than that it should have no ideal at all, no figure of a larger, better and sweeter life.

This secular dream of a future golden or half-golden age of a more perfected, rational and peacefully co-operative society has taken recently a singular step forward in the effectuating imagination of mankind and even got as far as some attempt at a first step towards actual effectuation. In ideal and imagination it has assumed the form of a political and economic society of the nations which will get rid of the cruel and devastating device of war, establish a reign of international law and order and solve without clash, strife or collision, by reason, by co-operation, by arbitration, by mutual accommodation all the more dangerous problems which still disturb or imperil the comfortable peace, amity and organised productiveness which should be the reasonable state of mankind. International peace, an ordered legality and arrangement of the world's affairs, a guaranteed liberty,—or for the unfit a preparation and schooling for liberty,—an organised unity of the life of the race, this is the figure of the golden age which we are now promised. At the first sight one has some sense of a lacuna somewhere, a suspicion of a perfection too external and too well-regulated by

clock-work and a timidly insistent idea that it may perhaps be neither so readily feasible nor so lyrically enchanting as its prophets pretend. One may be disposed to ask, what of the spirit and soul of man, the greatness of the inner perfection which can alone support and give security and some kind of psychological reality to even the most ideal arrangement of his outer life,—how far that has gone or is likely to go in the near future, or what means or opportunities the new order proposes to offer for its growth and satisfaction. But this is no doubt too esoteric a way of looking at things. The practical western mind does not trouble itself over much with these subtleties; it prefers, and rightly enough, since to get something done seems to be the chief actual business of man in life, to hasten to the matter in hand and realise something useful, visible and tangible, good enough for a practical beginning or step forward. It believes besides in the omnipotence of law and institution to make the life of man conformable to his intellectual or spiritual ideals; it is satisfied if it can write down and find sanctions for a good and convenient system of laws, a compact or constitution, set up the mechanical means for the enforcement of its idea, build into effective form a workable institution. Other less palpable things, if they are at all indispensable, are expected to develop of themselves, as surely they ought under good mechanical conditions.

Good philosophical as well as practical justification may be put forward for this attitude. Form, after all, is an effective suggestion to the soul; machinery, as even

churches and religions have been prone to believe, is all-powerful and can be trusted to create whatever you may need of the spirit. God himself or contriving Nature had first to invent the machinery and form of a universe and could only then work out in its mould some figure of the spirit. Therefore the sign of great hope, the good tidings of peace and good will unto men is not that a new and diviner or simply a more human spirit has been born into humanity, seized upon its leaders and extended itself among its ego-ridden, passion-driven, interest-governed millions, but that an institution has been begotten at Paris with the blessings of Premiers and Presidents,—the constitution of an international society, supported by the armed force of great nations and empires and therefore sure to be practicable, prosper and succeed, has been got into shape which will make war, militarism, oppression, exploitation an ugly dream of the past, induce Capital and Labour, lion and lamb, to lie down side by side in peace and not, as a wicked Bolshevism proposes, one well digested inside the other, and in fact bring about before long, sooner it is hoped rather than later, the grand fraternity of mankind. This is good news, if true. Still, before we enter the house of thanksgiving, let us pause a little and cast an eye of scrutiny on this new infant phenomenon.

A just, generous, cordial and valid League of Nations is the thing which has been created, it seems, to replace the old unjust Balances of Power and stumbling, quarrelsome Concerts. And if it is to succeed better than the loose, ineffective and easily dissoluble things which it

supplants, it must satisfy, one would think, certain conditions which they did not even attempt to fulfil. And one would at first sight fix something like the following as the indispensable conditions. First, this League must draw into its circle in one way or another all the existing nations of the earth; and that it must do on both just and agreeable terms so that they may join willingly and gladly and without any serious misgivings, reservations or heart-burnings; it must satisfy each and all by a fair and effective and, one must add in these democratic days, an honourable and equal position in this new society of the peoples. Since it should command and retain their moral assent and support, if it is to maintain in being an otherwise insecure material adhesion, it must, in order to do that constantly, not only at the moment of formation but in the future, base itself on no self-regarding law or established table of institutions fixed by any arbitrary will of those who for the moment are the strongest but on some firm, recognisable and always evolvable principle of equity and justice, for only where these things are is there a moral guarantee and security. The constitution of the League must provide a trustworthy means for the solution of all difficult, delicate and embarrassing questions which may hereafter endanger the infant and precarious frame-work of international society, and for that purpose it must establish a permanent, a central and a strong authority which all nations can readily recognise and accept as a natural head and faithful dynamic expression of the corporate being of mankind. These, one would think, are not at all

nebulous, fanciful or too idealistic demands, but the practical necessities of any system of yet loose unification such as now is contemplated, conditions it must from the first and increasingly satisfy if it is to survive the enormous difficulties of an enterprise which, as it proceeds, will have to work out of being most of the natural egoistic instincts and rooted past habits of the international mentality of the race.

This new gigantic bantling which has come into existence with War for its father and an armed and enforced Peace for its mother, with threatening and bloodily suppressed revolutions, a truncated internationalistic idealism and many half-curbed, just snaffled rearing national egoisms for its witnesses and god-parents, has not, when looked at from this standpoint, in spite of certain elements of promise, an altogether reassuring appearance. The circumstances of its inception were adverse and except by a tremendous effort of self-conquest in the minds of the rulers and statesmen of the victorious nations, a self-conquest rendered a thousand times more difficult by the stupendous magnitude and the intoxicating completeness of their victory, any at all complete result and auspicious new beginning could not be hoped for. This league now in the last throes of formation has not been a spontaneous creation of a peaceful, equal and well-combined will towards unity of all the world's peoples. It comes into being over-shadowed by the legacy of hatreds, reprisals, apprehensions, ambitions of a murderous world war chequered by revolutions which

have opened a new and alarming vista of world-wide unrest and disturbance. It has grown out of a vague but strong aspiration,—more among the rank and file of the nations, and even so not equally common to all of them, than among their governing men or classes,—to find some means for the future avoidance of violent catastrophes in the international life of mankind. It has been precipitated into actual and immediate being by the determination of an eminent idealistic statesman with the modified and in some cases unwilling assent of others who shared only partially or not at all his idealism, one man of strong will who aided by a commanding position given to him by circumstances and a flexible obstinacy in his use of them, has been able to impose some shadow or some first incomplete form of his ideal—the future alone can show which it is to be—on the crude course of events and the realistic egoism of governments and imperial nations. But in present fact the large and complete ideal with which he began his work, has been so impinged upon by the necessities of national passions, ambition, self-interest and by pressure of the force of circumstances—still in spite of all idealism the chief determining factors of life,—that it is difficult to put one's hand on any thing in the concrete arrangement formulated and say without doubt or qualm that here is the very embodiment of the high principles in whose name the great war was fought and won. This is not surprising, nor should it be disappointing except to those who trusted more to their hopes than to experience. All we have to

see is whether those high original principles were indeed necessary to the future security and evolution of this new association of the peoples and, if so, what chance they have of emerging from the forms in which they now seem to have been rather buried than given a body. And that will depend on the extent to which the conditions already suggested are realised or evolvable from the league's incipient constitution.

An effective League of Nations must draw into itself all the existing nations of mankind; for any considerable omission or exclusion will bring in almost inevitably an element of future danger, of possible disagreements and collisions, perhaps of a rival grouping with jealousies which must lead to another and more colossal catastrophe. In its ostensible figure this new League does not by any means wear a catholic appearance. Professedly, it is nothing but an association of actual friends and allies. In the front rank stand confident and masterful five great and powerful empires or nations,—the sole great powers left standing by the hurricane in unimpaired strength, and two of them indeed with an enormously increased power, influence and dominion : behind crowd in dimly and ineffectively a number of smaller European and American peoples, those who were allied to them or otherwise on their side in the war, and one feeble and disjointed oriental leviathan; but all these seem to partake only with a passive assent or a subordinate co-operation, —and in fact with very much of the first and very little of the latter,—whether in the determining of the form of

the League or in its control and government. And the immediate professed object of the association is not to knit the world together in the beginnings of a well conceived unity,—that could only have been done if all the peoples had taken a free and equal part in these deliberations, whereas in fact the whole thing has been hastily constructed in semi-secret conference by the victors of the war, and chiefly by the will of the five leading powers. Its object is to regulate the interests and mutual relations of the members of the League by rule, agreement, deliberation and arbitration and their relations with other states outside the League as much as may be by the same means; it is this only and in the beginning it is nothing more. But a door is left open for the nations still outside to enter in a given time, provided they subscribe unquestioningly to a system which they will have had no hand in framing, though under it they will have to live. On the other hand a door of egress is also provided for any nation wishing to recede hereafter from the League, and if disunion should set in among the greater powers, this dangerous, though under the circumstances perhaps unavoidable provision, may easily lead to the automatic dissolution of even this hesitating first frame of a partial unity.

But the facts and forces of the situation are perhaps more favourable than ostensible paper provisions. The nations not yet included are with two great and perilous exceptions small and inconsiderable and their position outside will be so disadvantageous, they will be at every turn so much at the mercy of this formidable combination,

—for the five dominant powers will easily be able, if they are determined and united, to enforce their will vigorously against all dissidents,—that they may be expected to subscribe more or less readily to its terms or at any rate to enter in after a few years' experience of exclusion. The Great Powers too are not likely to have strong reasons for breaking asunder for some years to come, and time may perhaps, provided no new revolutions sweep across the world, confirm the habit of united action. We may assume that here we have in fact, though not yet in name, the beginnings of a council or an imperfect federation of the world's peoples.

But the constitution of this Council and the conditions under which the variously circumstanced nations are admitted into or brought under it, have a still more baffling appearance. They do not at all correspond with the democratic idealism of the human mind of to-day but rather strike one as a structure of almost mediaeval irregularity, complexity, incoherent construction, a well-nigh feudal political building with some formal concessions on its ground floor to the modern canon of liberty and equality. A unification of mankind may proceed very much on the same lines as past unifications of smaller peoples into nations or empires. It might have been brought about by the military force or the political influence of some powerful king-state preponderant by land and sea,—*pompotent par terre et mer*, as Nostradamus prophetically described the British Empire,—not necessarily despotic and absolute

but easily first among equals ; and that I suppose is what would have happened if Germany had come up top dog in the struggle instead of a very much mutilated and flattened undermost. Nor is it at all certain that something of the sort will not eventually come about if the present attempt or crude sketch of a system should come to grief ; but for the moment this contingency has been prevented or at least postponed. That possibility eliminated, the unification may still take the form of an oligarchy or hegemony of great powers, leaders and masters of the herd, with the weaker rabble rest hanging on the flanks or posteriors of their mighty bellwethers and following them and their omnipotent decisions in sometimes a submissive and approbatory, sometimes a mutinous and discordant chorus ; something very much of this kind is what this new League has certainly been in its formation and is likely to turn out in its execution. But there was also the vain present hope or dream, the strong future though far-off possibility of an equal just and democratic federation of the peoples in which the dwarf and Goliath nations, the strong and the weak, the wealthy and the less wealthy, the immediately successful and the long or temporarily unfortunate,—who may yet have better gifts, have done really more for mankind than the arrivists among the nations,—will have, as is the rule or the ideal in all democratic bodies, in law and in initial fact an equal position and there will be only a natural leadership and influence to differentiate by a freely accorded greater

weight and voice. These were the three possibilities, and they represent respectively the ideal of the past which is said to have been buried in the grave of imperial Germany, the fact of the present which is a fact only and to none an ideal, and the ideal of the future, loudly trumpeted during the war, though there is none now, except the vanquished, the subject and the revolutionary, so poor and weak as to do it reverence.

The initial constitution of the League is almost frankly oligarchic in its disposal of the international balance of power,—not quite an absolute oligarchy, indeed, for there is certainly a general assembly which is so far democratic that all its members will exult in the dignifying possession of an equal vote. Honduras and Guatemala may, if the fancy pleases them, indulge themselves in some feeling of being lifted up to an equality with imperial England, America, the new arbiter of the world, and victorious France. But this is an illusion, a *trompe l'œil*. For we find that this general assembly is in no sense the governing body but only a secondary authority, a court of approval and reference, to which the powerful executive nations will refer, mostly at their own discretion, this or that doubtful question for discussion. In practice and fact the new sovereign of the world under this constitution,—*jagadishwara* *va*?—will be the executive body of the League of Nations. But there the five great powers will sit in a secure and formidable permanence, while a changeable selection of representatives picked out from the common herd will

diminutively assist their deliberations, assisting or discussing in the giant obscurity of their shadow. One can easily see how the superior management of the world's affairs will go under these conditions and in fact have already had a taste of its quality in the process of this formation and this building of a basis for what it is still hoped by many will be a long or even a permanent peace. Evidently in such a governing body the Great Five will determine the whole policy and action; nothing will readily pass which will be at all displeasing to these new masters of the earth, or let us say, to this new composite hegemony,—for its decisions will at no time be guided by that perilous, ductile and variable thing, a majority, but must be by unanimity. What in principle is this system but a novel, an improved, an enlarged and regularised edition of the Concert of Powers—liberalised a little in form because buttressed by a democratic general assembly which may, indeed, as circumstances develop and conditions change, become something, but may equally remain a dignified or undignified cypher,—but still in essence another and firmer Avatar of that old loose and dubious body. Even something of that historic device, the balance of power, though now much changed, shifted, disjointed and perilously lopsided, still remains subtly concealed in this form of a novel order. And that element is likely to pronounce itself later on; for where there is no impersonal governing principle and no clear original structure in the international body, its motions must be determined by a

balance of interests, and the balance of interests can only be kept reasonably steady by carefully preserving an established balance of power. That was the justification of the old armed order ; it is likely to be a necessity of this new system for regulating chaos.

This creation is a realistic practical construction with a very minimum concession to the new idealism, erected by statesmen who have been concerned to legalise the actual facts and organise the actual forces which have emerged from the world-war—barring a few inconveniently new-born and of a menacing significance which are being boycotted, blockaded or pressed out of existence,—and to secure their system against attack by any resuscitable ghost of the past or violently subversive genius of the future. From that point of view it has been constructed with a remarkable skill and fidelity to present realities, though one may be tempted to think with an insufficient allowance for obscure but already visible potentialities. The correspondence between fact and form is accurate to perfection. Five powers have been the real victors of the war, three of them central and decisive forces who now actually control the world by their will, and two others who intervened as less powerful subsidiary strengths, but can put in some effective claim and material weight into the future balance of forces. This fact is reproduced in the constitution of the governing body ; it is these five who by virtue of their wealth and force are to have in it a permanent voice, the three great ones to strike the major

chords and determine the general harmony of the concert, the two others to bring in, as best they can and when they can, minor chords and unessential variations. Then there are the great number of small or weaker nations who have at their command minor material effectives and, though incapable of being principals in any very great conflict may be useful as minor auxiliaries, the free peoples, allies included from the beginning by right, neutrals invited to participate in a settled organisation of peace though they did not throw their weight into the decision of war, enemies, old or new, who may be admitted when they have satisfied more or less onerous or crushing and disabling conditions. These will make the general assembly : some of them will have from time to time an uncertain voice in the governing body ; the rest will be the mass, the commons, the general body who will possess some limited amount of actual power and some kind of moral force behind the executive. Labour too has been made by the War a great though as yet incoherent international power, and the League, wishing evidently to be wise in time and make terms with this formidable new fact, recognises at its side Labour in a special separate conference.

But there are also new Asiatic peoples who cannot now be admitted, because they are infants and unripe ; there are subject and protected nations for whom the war was not fought and who cannot share in the once hoped-for general freedom, but must trust to the generous and unselfish liberalism of their rulers and pro-

tectors ; there are African tribes who are the yet unmanufactured raw material of humanity. These are to be left under the old or put under a new control or are to be entrusted to the paternal hands of this or that governing power who will be in the legal style of the new dispensation, not masters and conquerors,—for in this just and miraculous peace there are no annexations, only rectified arrangements of control and territory,—but trustees, mandatories. A mandate from the League will be the safeguard of these less fortunate peoples. For we are, it seems, about to live in quite a new moralized world in which the general conscience of mankind will be wide awake and effective and the League is there to represent it. As its representative it will take a periodical report of their trust from the trustees,—who also as the great powers of the league will be themselves at once mandatories, leaders and deputies of this same general conscience. All existing forces are represented in just proportions in this very remarkable constitution.

The idealist may find much to object against the perpetuation and hardening of the unideal existent fact on which the system of the league is founded, but undoubtedly that system has a good deal to say for itself, can urge very urgent considerations from the point of view of practical possibility. One indispensable condition of its success is a solid central authority, strong and permanent, capable of enforcing its decisions, and it must be an organ which all nations can accept as the natural head and faithful dynamic expression of the

corporate being mankind. As far as is at all practicable at the moment, here is, it may be said, just such an authority. The international body of mankind is still an amorphous mass, its constituent peoples unaccustomed to act together, heterogeneous by virtue of their various degrees of development, organised power, experience, civilisation: a free general assembly, a parliament of the world, an equal federation of mankind, is out of the question; even an equal federation of free and civilised peoples is likely to be an incoherent and futile body incapable of effective corporate action. What is to enforce and give practically to the general needs and desires if not the power, influence, authority and, where need is, the strong arm of the great nations and empires acting in concert but with a due regard for the common interests and general voice? Who else are to determine preponderatingly the decisions they will have to enforce or can give to them a permanent principle or sustained practical policy? No combination of little American republics and minor European powers could dictate a world policy to the United States, France and the British Empire or could be allowed to play by the blind rule of a majority with these great interests. But in the League the various constituents of the corporate body are so ranked and related as to give precisely a faithful dynamic expression of it in its present conditions; whatever evolution is necessary can be worked out through a general control and a periodical revision of treaties and relations. In brief, the whole international

condition of the world is a chaos that has to be brought into order and shape, and that is a work which cannot be done by an idyllic idealism or an abstract perfection of principles which are not in correspondence with the actualities of things and, if prematurely applied, are likely to bring in a worse confusion, but can only be accomplished by a strong and capable organised Force which will take things as they stand, impose a new system of law and order on this chaos, some firm however imperfect initial framework, and watch over its development with a strict eye on the practical possibilities of progress. On that safe and firm basis a slow but sure and deliberate advance can be made towards a future better law and ideal order. There is another side to the question, but let us suppress it for the moment and give full value and weight to these considerations.

But all the more indispensable does it then become that the principles of the progress to be made shall be recognised from the beginning in the law and constitution of the League, or at least indicated in such a way and so impressed on its system as to ensure that on those lines or towards the fulfilment of those principles its action should proceed and not be diverted to other, baser, reactionary or obstructive uses. The declaration of general principles and their embodiments and safeguards in the democratic constitutions promulgated in the eighteenth century were no barren ideologists' formularies,—any more than the affirmation of constitutional principles in earlier documents like the Magna

Charta,—but laid down the basis on which government and progress must proceed in the new-born order of the world and were at once a signpost and an effective moral guarantee for the assured march of Democracy. We look in vain in the constitution of the league for any such great guiding principles. The provisions for the diminution of the possibilities of war, the creation of some new small nation and the safety given to those that already existed can hardly be called by that name. There is here no hint of any charter of the international rights and duties of the peoples in a new order making at once for liberty and union. The principle of self-determination over which the later stages of the war were fought has been ruthlessly thrown overboard and swallowed up in the jaws of a large pot-bellied diplomatic transaction,—it may be only for a time like the prophet in the stomach of the whale, but for the nonce there is an almost perfect disappearance. Some infinitesimal shadow of it we see in petty transactions like the arrangement about Schleswig Holstein, but for the rest the map of the world has been altered very much in the old familiar fashion without any consistent regard to nationality or choice, but rather by the agreement and fiat of armed victorious nations. A famous pronouncement during the war had denounced the theory of trusteeship, that cloak which can cover with so noble a grace the hard reality of domination and exploitation,—things now too gross in their nakedness to be presented undraped to the squeamish moral sense of a modern humanity. But in this

afterwar system that very theory of trusteeship is glorified and consecrated, though with the gloss of a mandate subject to examination—by a body whose action and deliberation will be controlled by the trustees. Subject nations are still to exist in this world; for the system of mandates is only to be applied where a previous subjection has been abrogated, it is to be applied to some of the Asiatic or African peoples who lay under the uplifted scourge of the now fallen empires; the rest who had the advantage of milder masters, the remaining subject peoples from Ireland to Korea, have no need of any such safeguard !

It may be that all this denial of a too ideal principle of liberty was inevitable; for we must, we are now told, not be in too great a hurry to get from midnight to mid-day; the law of the times and seasons must be observed, a mitigated darkness must first come and then twilight and then dawn and then the glad confident morning before we can live in the golden noon of a universalised liberty and justice. But meanwhile what other guiding principle, what embodied idea of law and right, what equitable and equal balance of obligations is to be the firm basis of the new order ? We find none, only a machinery for the diminution of the chances of war, not for their removal, by compulsory arbitration, by the threat or actuality of armed force and economic pressure; for the revision of treaties; for the secured possession of colonies, dependencies, markets, frontiers, ports, mandates; for the international discussion and settlement of the con-

flicting claims of Capital and Labour. There is a system of immediately practicable relations, an attempt to affirm and to secure a new *status quo*, a provision for minor manipulations and alternation; but there is little actual foundation for a new and nobler world-order. A preparation for it may have been the intention of the institutors, but the fulfilment of their intention is left very much at the mercy of the uncertain chances of the future. The idealism of the founder has so far triumphed as to get some limited form of a League of Nations admitted and put into shape, but at every other point the idealist has gone under and the stamp of the politician and diplomat is over this whole new modern machine,—of the mere practical man with his short sight and his rough and ready methods. It is a leaky and ill-balanced ship launched on waters of tempest and chaos without a chart or compass or sailing instructions.

Well, but in other times devices as rough and unbecoming have been the foundations of great structures, and if this League can be kept in being there may be some chance of getting it suffused with the principles and ideals for whose realisation the vague heart and conscience of mankind, baffled always by its own lax complicities, is beginning to thirst and weary. But to the eye of the critic this new pact would seem to carry in itself the ominous seeds of its own future mutability and perhaps dissolution. For first of all the League is entering into being with a very limited and feeble enthusiasm on its behalf even in the nations which are interested

in its maintenance; America does not seem to be in a quite flawless harmony of agreement with its President in his self-satisfaction over the shapely beauty of his nursling; the world of Labour and socialism is critical, dissatisfied, distrustful, uneasy, simmering over into brief and uncertain but wide-spread and menacing strikes and formidable demands and murmurings. These are not favourable signs. The League will need all the support and hearty acquiescence it can get to overcome the difficulties that it will meet in constructing the world according to its own idea and fashion, a task which will not end but only be just beginning when peace is concluded, and it is doubtful whether it will have what it needs in any but the most grudging measure. Not enthusiastic support, but a sort of muttering acquiescence for want of any chance of a better thing at the moment is the general mood of the world's peoples whose interests it proposes to manage.

But let us suppose the system accepted and under way,—what are the actual facts which will meet it in the future? Its system will stand for a long time to come for the nations conquered in the war as a perpetuation of their downfall, diminution and disgrace; it will be to them a gaoler and inflicter of penalties, a guardian of tasks and payments with an uplifted scourge. It need not have been so, if a generous and equal peace had been made or, better, if apart from all such questions, there had been a peace based not on the will of a conquering might, even though better-minded than the might it

conquered, but on clear and undeniable principles, such as the utmost possible self-determination, equal opportunity, equal position for the world's peoples; that would have been indeed a peace without any other victors or vanquished than vanquished force and wrong and victorious equity. But the leading nations have chosen to impose a diplomatic peace in which the League which imposes it figures as an administrator of criminal justice. The vanquished nations, now for the most part democracies and no longer the old aggressive militarisms which made the war, were, it is said, criminals and breakers of peace and the penalty inflicted is far too light in comparison with their crimes. It may be so in literal terms, —though a criminal justice inflicted by one of two parties in a quarrel on his beaten opponent and not by an impartial judge is apt rightly or wrongly to be suspect to the mere human reason and at best much of what is called justice is only legalised revenge,—but still it may be that nothing but justice or even less than justice has been done. But that makes no difference to the fact that a number of new democracies, vigorous and intellectual peoples, born to a new life which should have been one of hope and good will to the coming order, will be there inevitably as a source of revolt and disorder, eager to support any change which will remove their burdens, gratify resentment and heal their festering wounds. They may be held down, kept weak and maimed, even though one of them is laborious, skilful, organised Germany, but that will mean a weakness and an ill-balance in the new order itself, and

if they recover strength, it will not be to asquiesce in their inferior place and the perpetual triumph and greatness of their ancient rivals. Only in a legalised system of equal democracies can there be some true chance of the cessation of these jealousies, enmities, recurrent struggles. Otherwise war will break out again or in some other form the old battle continue. An unequal balance can never be a security for a steady and peaceful world-system.

Pass, if this were the only peril of the newly inaugurated system. But this League seems also to stand for a perpetuation of a new *status quo* to be arrived at by the peace which is being made its foundation. The great powers, it would seem, have arrived at a compact to secure their dominions and holdings against any future menace of diminution. This arrangement is of the nature at once of a balance of power—but with all the dangers of an unequal balance,—and of an attempt to perpetuate for ever certain at present preponderating influences and established greatnesses. That attempt is against all the teaching of history and all the perennial movement of Nature; the league which stands committed to it is committed to a jealously guarded insecurity and the preservation of an unstable equilibrium. It is not certain that the constructing powers will themselves remain consistently satisfied with the terms of their compact or able to resist that urge of national and of human destiny which is greater than any diplomatic arrangement or the wills of governments and statesmen. But even if that unheard of thing be realised between them, a durable

international friendship and alliance, it may serve for a time, but will it serve for a very long time against the world's urge towards change? Power rots by having security, and those who are powerful to-day to impose their will on the nations, may not always keep that force in spite of their bulk and wealth and armed magnitudes. Then there are old sores perpetuated and new sores opened by this arrangement of a hastily made peace of devices and compromises. Whether the Balkan question will be permanently settled is at least dubious; but there will be now the question of a German Bohemia, a parti-coloured Poland, perhaps a Saar region with its wealth in the possession of a foreign power, an insoluble question of Yugoslav and Italian, a new question of Tyrol, an Irish trouble and a Korean trouble in which the League cannot interfere without deep offence to England and Japan and which yet clamour more and more for a settlement, a Russian chaos. There is a Mahomedan world which will one day have a word to say about the new *status quo*. There is the whole question of Asia and Africa, which is the most formidable but of which much need not be said, for its issues are patent to every eye. The partition of Africa between a few European powers with all its economical advantages can be no permanent solution. Asia is arising in the surge of an upward wave and cannot always be kept in a condition of weakness, tutelage and vassalage. When the time comes, how will a league mainly of European and American peoples deal with her claims? Will Europe be con-

tent to recede from Asia? Will the mandatories be in any haste to determine their mandate? Can there be any modified perpetuation of present conditions which will be at all compatible with an equality between the two continents? These are questions which no imperfect sketch of a league of nations on the existing basis can decide according to its phantasy; only the onward moving world-spirit can give them their answer.

None of these dangers and difficulties are as yet formidable in their immediate incidence, but there is another problem of a pressing, immediate insistency and menace which touches with its close foreshadowing finger the very life of any new international system and that is the approaching struggle for supremacy between capital and labour. This is a far other matter than the clash of conflicting imperialisms in the broad spaces or the wrangle of quarrelsome nationalisms snarling at each other's heels or tearing each other in the narrower ways of the Earth for those are questions at most of division of power, territory and economic opportunity on the present basis of society, but this means a questioning of that basis and a shaking of the very foundations of the European world order. This League is a league of governments, and all these governments are bourgeois monarchies or republics, instruments of a capitalistic system assailed by the tides of socialism. Their policy is to compromise, to concede in detail, but to prolong their own principle so that they may survive and capitalism be still the dominant power of a new mixed semi-

socialistic order, very much as the governments which formed the Holy Alliance sought to save the dominance of the old idea of aristocratic monarchy by a compromise with the growing spirit of democracy. What they offer is better and more human conditions for the labourer, even a certain association in the government of the society, but still a second and not a primary place in the scale. This was indeed all to which Labour itself formerly aspired, and it is all to which the rear of its army still looks forward, but it is already ceasing to be the significance of the Labour movement; a new idea has arisen, the dominance, the rule of labour, and it has already formulated itself and captured a great portion of the forces of socialism. It has even established for a while in Russia a new kind of government, a dictatorship of the proletariat, which aspires to effect a rapid transition to another order of society.

Against this novel idea and its force the existing governments are compelled by the very principle of their being to declare war and to struggle against its coming with all the strength at their disposal and strive to mobilise against it whatever faith in existing things still remains in the mind of the peoples. The old order has still no doubt strength enough to crush out of existence, if it wills, the form which this coming of Demogorgon has already taken and to make a more or less speedy end of Russian Bolshevism. The Bolshevik system, isolated in a single country, weakened by its own initial crudities and revolutionary violences, struggling fiercely

against impracticable odds, may well be annihilated; but the thing which is behind Bolshevism and has given it its unexpected virility and vitality, cannot be so easily conjured or pressed out of being. That thing is the transference of the basis of society from wealth to labour, from the power of money to the simple power of the man and his work, and that cannot be stopped or prevented—though it may be for a time put off,—not because labour any more than wealth is the true basis of society, but because this is the logical and inevitable outcome of the whole evolution of European society. The rule of the warrior and aristocrat, the Kshatriya, founded upon power has given place to the rule of the Vaishyas, the professional and industrial classes, founded upon wealth and legalism, and that again must yield to the rule of the Sudra, the proletariat, founded upon work and association. This change like the others cannot be accomplished without much strife and upheaval and there is every sign that its course will be attended with the shattering violence of revolution.

It is proposed indeed to the new force that it shall work itself out calmly, slowly, peacefully by the recognised means of Parliamentarism; but Parliamentarism is passing through a phase of considerable discredit, and a doubt has arisen in the minds of the workers whether it is at all a right or possible means for their object and whether by a reliance upon it they will not be playing into the hands of their opponents: for Parliament is actually a great machine of the propertied classes and

even the Parliamentary socialist tends easily to become a semidisguised or a half and half bourgeois. The new order of society would seem to demand the institution of a new system of government. If then a new order of society is bound to come with its inevitable reversal of existing conditions, and still more if it comes by a revolutionary struggle, how will a system of a League of Nations based upon existing conditions, a League not really of nations but of governments, and of governments committed to the maintenance of the old order and using their closer association as a means for combating the new idea which is hostile to their own form of existence, be likely to fare in this earth-shaking or this tornado? It is more likely to disappear than to undergo a gentle transformation, and if it disappears, another system of international comity may replace it, but it will not be a League of Nations.

We will suppose, however, or even trust, that the League, embodying in spite of appearances the best combined statesmanship of the world, circumvents all these perils, weathers every storm and leads forward the destinies of mankind in the paths of an at first more or less uneasy, but eventually firmer increasing peace and mutual accommodation. What is it then that it will have at the beginning or in the end actually accomplished? It will have made some beginning of the substitution of a state of law for the older international status which alternated and oscillated between outbreaks of war and an armed peace. That, no doubt, if at all firmly done,

will be a great step forward in the known history of human civilisation. For it will mean that what was founded in the unit of the nation centuries ago, will be now at last founded in the society of the nations. But let us not leap too easily at what may well be an unsound parallel. What civilised society has done most effectively from the beginning is to substitute some kind of legalised relation, legalised offence and defence, legalised compensation or revenge for injuries in place of the state of insecure peace and frequent private or tribal warfare in which each man had to claim what he considered to be justice by the aid of his kin or the strength of his own hand. At present the persistent survival of crime is the only remnant of that earlier pre-legal state of natural violence. But for an organised society to deal with the refractory individual is a comparatively facile task; here the units are nations with a complex corporate personality, great masses of men themselves too organised, representing the vital interests, claims, passions of millions of men divided by corporate, powerful and persistent exclusiveness, hatreds, jealousies, antipathies which the founding of this would-be all-healing League and new society of peoples finds much acerbated, much more pronounced than in the days before the deluge when a tolerant and easy cosmopolitanism was more in fashion, and which its disposition seems calculated to deepen and perpetuate rather than to heal and abolish. And it is on this incoherent mass of peoples void of all living principle or urgent will of union that a status of peace and settled law has

to be imposed and this in a period of increasing chaos, upheaval, menace of revolution.

The national society succeeded only in proportion as it developed an indivisible unity and a single homogeneous authority which could both legislate, or at least codify and maintain law, and see to the rigorous execution of its settled rules, decrees, and ordinances. Here the work has to be done by an institution which represents no embodied unity, but rather a jamming or stringing together of very strongly separate units, and which does not legislate, but only passes very partial and opportunist special decrees *ad hoc*, and to enforce them has constantly to resort to intimidation, blockade, economical pressure, menace of a wholesale starvation of peoples, menace of violent military occupation,—things which prolong the after-war state of unrest and recoil in their secondary effects upon the countries whose governments are engaged in this singular international pastime. It is not difficult to see that a better system and a better means must be found if the latest strong hope of humanity is to turn out anything more than one other generous illusion of the intellectuals and one other chimerical wave of longing in the vague heart of the peoples.

Even the national society has not been able after so long a time and so much experience to eliminate in its own body the disease of strife between its members, class war, bitter hostility of interests and ideas breaking out at times into bloody clashes, civil wars, sanguinary revolutions or disastrous, grimly obstinate and²ruthless

economical struggles which are the preparers of an eventual physical conflict. And the reason is not far to seek. Law for all its ermine of pomp and solemn bewigged pretension of dignity was in its origin nothing but the law of the stronger and the more skilful and successful who imposed their rule on the acquiescent or subjugated rest of the people. It was the decrees of the dominant class which were imposed on the previous mass of existing customs and new-shaped them into the mould of the prevailing idea and interest ; Law was itself a regulated and organised Force establishing its own rules of administration and maintaining them by an imminent menace of penalty and coercion. That is the sense of the symbolic sword of Justice, and as for her more mythical balance, a balance is a commercial and artificial sign, not a symbol of either natural or ideal equity, and even so this balance of Justice had for its use only a theoretical or not always even a theoretical equality of weights and measures. Law was often in great measure a system of legalised oppression and exploitation and on its political side has had often enough plainly that stamp, though it has assumed always the solemn face of a sacrosanct order and government and justice.

The history of mankind has been very largely a long struggle to get unjust law changed into justice,—not a mystic justice of an imposed decree and rule “by law established” claiming to be right because it is established, but the intelligible justice of equality and equity. Much

has been done, but as much or more still remains to be done, and so long as it is not established, there can be no sure end to civil strife and unrest and revolution. For the injustice of law can only be tolerated so long as there is either in those who suffer by it a torpid blindness or acquiescent submission or else, the desire of equity once awakened, a ready means to their hand of natural and peaceful rectification. And a particular unjust law may indeed be got altered with less of effort and difficulty, but if injustice or, let us say simply, absence of just equality and equity pervades a state of things, a system, then there must be grave trouble and there can be no real equilibrium and peace till it is amended. Thus in modern society strikes and lockouts are its form of civil war, disastrous enough to both sides, but still they are constantly resorted to and cannot be replaced by a better way, because there is no confidence in any possible legal award or "compulsory" arbitration which can be provided for under the existing conditions. The stronger side relies on the advantage which it enjoys under the established system, the weaker feels that the legalised balance of the State exists by a law which still favours the capitalist interest and the domination of wealth and that at most it can get from this State only inadequate concessions which involve by their inadequacy more numerous struggles in the future. They cling to the strike as their natural weapon and one trustworthy resource. For that reason all ingeminations and exhortations to economical peace and brotherhood

are a futile counsel. The only remedy is a better, more equal and more equitable system of society. And this is only a particular instance of a situation common enough in different forms under the present world-order.

The application is evident to the present international attempt and its hopes of a legalised and peaceful human society. The League of Nations has been established by victorious Force, claiming no doubt to be the force of victorious right and justice, but incapable by the vice of its birth of embodying the real non-combatant justice of an equal and impartial equity. Its decrees and acts are based on no ascertainable impersonal principle, but are mainly the decrees, the *sic volo, sic jubeo* of three or four mighty nations. Even if they happen to be just, they have this fatal vice that there is nothing to convince the mind of the losing parties or even the common mind that there is behind them any surety of a general and reliable equity, and as a matter of fact many of them have aroused very generally grave dissatisfaction and hostile criticism. And the Supreme Council, that veiled hieratic autocrat of the situation, does not seem itself to appeal to any distinct higher principles in its action, even when such do actually exist and could be insisted on with force and clarity. At the time of writing, there has been a case of the denudation of a suffering and now half-starved country by the army of a small occupying power—victorious not by its own arms, but by the moral and economic pressure of the League—and the council has very rightly interfered. But it has not done

that publicly on grounds that have anything to do with international justice or humanity or even the rudiments of international ethics, such as they are, but on this ground that the property of the vanquished country is the common spoil, or, let us say, means of compensation of the victors and this one little rapacious ally cannot be allowed to appropriate it all by main force to the detriment of its greater fellow-administrators of a self-regarding justice,—who may even as a result find Hungary thrown as a starving pauper on their hands instead of serving their will as a solvent debtor!—If this realistic spirit is to be the spirit of the new international system and that is to persist, its success is likely to be more formidable to humanity than its failure. For it may mean to the suffering portions of mankind the legalisation and perpetuation of intolerable existing injustices for which there could have been a hope of more easy remedy and redress in the previous looser conditions. If this League of Nations is to serve and not merely to dominate mankind, if it is to raise and free, as it claims and professes, and not to bind and depress humanity, it must be cast in another mould and animated by another spirit. This age is not like that in which the reign of law was established in individual nations; men are no longer inclined, as then they were, to submit to existing conditions in the idea that they are an inevitable dispensation of nature. The idea of equity, of equality, of common rights has been generalised in the mind of the race, and human society must move henceforward

steadily towards its satisfaction on peril of constant unrest and a rising gradation of catastrophe.

That means that the whole spirit and system of the League will have to be remodelled, the initial mistakes of its composition rectified and the defects inherent in its origin got rid of, before it can be brought into real consonance with the nobler hopes or even the pressing needs of the human race. At present it is, to reverse the old phrase, a pouring of an old and very musty wine into showy new bottles,—the old discredited spirit of the diplomacy of concert and balance and the government of the strongest, of the few dominant kingdoms, states and empires. That must disappear in a more just and democratic international system. The evil legacy of the war with its distinctions between “enemy,” allied and friendly nations or more favoured or less favoured peoples, will have to be got out of the system of the League, for so long as it is there, it will act as a virus which will prevent all healthy growth and functioning. A League of Nations which is to bring a real peace and beginning of justice and ordered comity in progress to the world and a secret council of allied governments imposing as best they can their irresponsible will on a troubled and dissatisfied Europe, Asia and Africa are two very different things, and while one lasts, the other cannot be got into being. The haphazard make of the League will have to be remoulded into a thing of plain and candid structure and meaning and made to admit that element of clear principle which

it has omitted from its constitution. An equal system of international rights and obligations, just liberties and wholesome necessary restrictions can alone be a sound basis of international law and order. And there can be no other really sound basis of the just and equal liberty of the peoples than that principle of self-determination which was so loudly trumpeted during the war, but of which an opportunist statesmanship has made short work and reduced to a deplorable nullity. A true principle of self-determination is not at all incompatible with international unity and mutual obligation, the two are rather indispensable complements, even as individual liberty in its right sense of a just and sufficient room for healthy self-development and self-determination is not at all incompatible with unity of spirit and mutual obligation between man and man. How to develop it out of present conditions, antipathies, ambitions, grievances, national lusts, jealousies, egoisms is indeed a problem, but it is a problem which will have to be attended to to-day or to-morrow on peril of worse things. To say that these developments are impossible is to say that a League of Nations in the real sense as opposed to a League of some nations for their common benefit, a dominant alliance, is an impossibility. In that case the present institution called by that imposing name can only be an enlarged and more mechanised edition of the old Concert or a latter-day Holy Alliance of the governments and will sooner or later go the way of its predecessors. If that is so, then

the sooner we recognise it, the better for all concerned; there will be less of false hopes and misdirected energies with their burden of disappointment, unrest, irritation and perilous reaction. To go on upon the present lines is to lead straight towards another and greater catastrophe.

To insist on these things is not to discourage unduly the spirit of hope which humanity needs for its progress; it is necessary in order that that hope may not nourish itself on illusions and turn towards misdirecting paths, but may rather see clearly the right conditions of its fulfilment and fix its energy on their realisation. It is a comfortable but a dangerous thing to trust with a facile faith that a bad system will automatically develop into a good thing or that some easy change is bound to come which will make for salvation, as for instance that Europe will evolve true democracy and that the League of Nations, now so imperfectly established, will be made perfect by its better spirit. The usual result of this temper of sanguine acceptance or toleration is that the expected better state makes indeed some ameliorations when it comes, but takes into it too a legacy of the past, much of its obscure spirit and a goodly inheritance of its evils, while it adds to the burden new errors of its own making. Certainly, the thing which was behind this new formation, this League of governments, is bound in some way or other to come; for I take it that a closer system of international life is sooner or later inevitable because it is a necessary outcome of

modern conditions, of the now much closer relations and interactions of the life of the human race, and the only alternative is increasing trouble, disorder and ultimate chaos. But this inevitable development may take according to the way and principle we follow, a better or a worse turn. It may come in the form of a mechanical and oppressive system as false and defective as the industrial civilization of Europe which in its inflated and monstrous course brought about the present wreck, or it may come in the form and healthy movement of a sounder shaping force which can be made the basis or at least the starting point for a still greater and more beneficial human progress. No system indeed by its own force can bring about the change that humanity really needs; for that can only come by its growth into the firmly realised possibilities of its own higher nature, and this growth depends on an inner and not an outer change. But outer changes may at least prepare favourable conditions for that more real amelioration,—or on the contrary they may lead to such conditions that the sword of Kalki can alone purify the earth from the burden of an obstinately Asuric humanity. The choice lies with the race itself; for as it sows, so shall it reap the fruit of its Karma.

And that brings us back to the idea with which we started and with it we may as well close, however remote it may sound to the practical mind of a still materialistic generation. The idea which Europe follows of an outer political and social perfection, reposes, as far as it goes,

on a truth, but only on one half of the truth and that the lower half of its periphery. A greater side of it is hidden behind the other older idea, still not quite dead in Asia and now strong enough to be born again in Europe, that as with the individual, so with the community of mankind, salvation cannot come by the outer Law alone; for the Law is only an intermediate means intended to impose a rein of stringent obligation and a better standard on the original disorder of our egoistic nature. Salvation for individual or community comes not by the Law but by the Spirit.¹ The conditions of individual and social perfection are indeed the same, freedom and unity; the two things are complements and to follow one at the expense of the other is a vain heresy. But real unity cannot come to the race, until man surmounting his egoistic nature is one in heart and spirit with man and real freedom cannot be till he is free from his own lower nature and finds the force of the truth which has been so vainly taught by the saints and sages that the fullness of his perfected individuality is one thing with a universality by which he can embrace all mankind in his heart, mind and spirit. But at present individuals and nations are equally remote from accepting any such inner mantra of unity and we can only hope at most that the best will increasingly turn their minds in that direction and create again and this time with a

¹ We in India have also yet to realise that truth—not by the *Shastra*, but by the *Atman*.

newer and more luminous insistence a higher standard of human aspiration. Till then jarring Leagues of Nations and some mechanical dissoluble federation of the race must serve our turn for practice and for a far-off expectation. But only then can the dream of a golden age of a true communal living become feasible and be founded on a spiritual and therefore a real reign of freedom and unity when the race learns to turn its eyes inward and not any longer these things, but mankind the people of God and a soul and body of the Divine becomes the ideal of our perfection.

AFTER THE WAR

The great war has for some time been over: it is already receding into the near distances of the past. Around us is a black mist and welter of the present, before us the face of a dim and ambiguous future. It is just possible, however, to take some stock of the immediate results of the war, although by no stretch of language can the world situation be called clear, for it is marked rather by chaotic drift and an unexampled confusion. The ideals which were so loud of mouth during the collision—mainly as advertising agents of its conflicting interests,—are now discredited and silent: an uneasy locked struggle of irreconcilable forces entangled in an inextricable clasp of enmity, but too weak or too exhausted to prevail against each other and unable to separate, a bewildered opportunism incapable of guiding itself or finding an issue is the character of the present situation. Humanity has the figure of a derelict with broken mast and rudder drifting on a sea still upheaved by the after-swell of the tempest, the statesmen of the Supreme Council figuring as its impotent captains and shouting directions that have not the least chance of useful execution and have to be changed from moment to moment. Nowhere is there a guiding illumination or a just idea

that is at all practicable. A great intellectual and moral bankruptcy, an immense emptiness and depression has succeeded to the delirium of massacre.

This is indeed the most striking immediate after-result of the war, the atmosphere of a worldwide disappointment and disillusionment and the failure of great hopes and ideals. What high and large and dazzling things were promised us during the war, and where are they now? Rejected, tarnished, dishonoured they lie cast aside dead and stripped and desecrated on the blood-stained refuse heap that the war has left behind it. Not one remains to us. The war that was fought to end war has been only the parent of fresh armed conflict and civil discord and it is the exhaustion that followed it which alone prevents as yet another vast and sanguinary struggle. The new fair and peaceful world order that was promised us has gone far away into the land of the chimeras. The League of Nations that was to have embodied it hardly even exists or exists only as a mockery and a byeword. It is an ornamental, a quite helpless and otiose appendage to the Supreme Council, at present only a lank promise dangled before the vague and futile idealism of those who are still faithful to its sterile formula, a League on paper and with little chance, even if it becomes more apparently active, of being anything more than a transparent cover or a passive support for the domination of the earth by a close oligarchy of powerful governments or, it may be even, of two allied and imperialistic nations. The principle of self-determination

once so loudly asserted is now openly denied and summarily put aside by the victorious empires. In its place we have the map of Europe remade on old diplomatic principles, Africa appropriated and partitioned as the personal property of two or three great European powers and western Asia condemned to be administered under a system of mandates that are now quite openly justified as instruments of commercial exploitation and have to be forced on unwilling peoples by the sovereign right of the machine-gun and the bayonet. The spectacle of subject peoples and "protected" nations demanding freedom and held down by military force continues to be a principal feature of the new order. The promised death of militarism is as far off as ever: its spirit and its actuality survive everywhere, and only its centre of strength and main operation has shifted westward—and eastward. All these things were foreseen while yet the war continued by a few who even while holding to the ideal persisted in seeing clearly: they are now popular commonplaces.

This however is only one side of the situation, the most present, insistent and obvious, but not therefore the most important and significant. It marks a stage, it is not the definite result of the great upheaval. The expectation of an immediate and magically complete transformation and regeneration of the world by the radical operation of the war was itself an error. It was an error to imagine that the power of the past rooted in the soil of long-seated human custom and character

would disappear in one fierce moment or abdicate at once to the virgin power of the future. The task to be accomplished is too great to be so easy: the regeneration of man and his life, his rebirth into a higher nature is not to be effected by so summary and outward a process. It was an error to suppose that the war was or could be the painful, the terrible, but in the end the salutary crisis by which that great change would be decisively effected,—a change that would mean a complete renovation and purification of the soul, mind and life of humanity. The war came only as a first shock and overturn, an opportunity for certain clearances, a death-blow to the moral though not as yet to the material hold of certain ideas and powers that were till then confident and throned, sure of the present and hopeful of their possession of the future. It has loosened the soil, but the uprooting of all the old growths was more than it could effectuate. It has cleared a certain amount of ground, but the fruitful filling of that ground is an operation for other forces: it has ploughed and upturned much soil, but it is as yet a far cry to the new sowing and the harvest. It was, finally, and it still continues a cherished error to imagine that the mere alteration, however considerable, of political or other machinery is the sufficient panacea for the shortcomings of civilisation. It is a change of spirit, therefore a spiritual change, that can alone be the sanction and the foundation of a greater and better human existence.

The survival of old principles and conditions is still not

the important matter. However great their appearance of outward and material strength, inwardly they are sick, weakened and have forfeited the promise of the future: all their intellectual and moral hold is gone and with that disappearance there is evident a notable failing of their practical effectuating wisdom and of their sustaining self-confidence. The instinct of self-continuation, the impetus of their past motion keeps them going, and they must last so long as they have some hold in the inert continuity of the past mental and vital habit of the peoples and are not pushed over by the growing and arising strength of the new forces that belong to the future. All their movements only serve to increase that strength, and whether they seek to perpetuate themselves by a violent insistence on their own principle or haggle and compromise with the quite opposite principles that are destined to replace them, each step they take brings them nearer to their ending. It is more fruitful to regard rather the new things that are not yet in possession of the present but already struggling to assert themselves against its ponderous and effective but ephemeral pressure.

It was very evident during the progress of the war that there were two great questions that it would not solve but rather must prepare for an acute stage of crisis, the growing struggle between Capital and Labour and the Asiatic question, no longer a quarrel now between rival exploiters but the issue between invading Europe and a resurgent Asia. The war itself was in its immediate aspect a battle between the German idea and the middle-class liberalism

represented by the western peoples, France, England, America, and during the settlement of that present issue the other two questions more momentous for the future had to be held in abeyance. There was a truce between Capital and Labour, a truce determined only by a violent concentration of national feeling that proved too strong for the vague idealistic internationalism of the orthodox socialistic idea, not by any essential issue; for the futile idyllic promise of a rapprochement and a reconciliation between the hostile classes was too hollow an unreality to count as a factor. At the same time the Asiatic question too was in suspension and even enticing prospects of self-determination and independence or more qualified but still tempting allurements were proffered by the liberal empires to peoples who had been till then held as beyond the pale of civilisation. The Asiatic peoples too weak for an independent action ranged themselves on the side whose success seemed to offer to them the greater hope or else the least formidable menace. All this is now of the past: the natural and inevitable relations have re-asserted themselves and these great questions are coming to a head. The modern contest between Capital and Labour has entered into a new phase and the two incurably antagonistic principles are evidently moving in spite of many hesitations and indecisions towards the final and decisive battle. In Asia the issue has already been joined between the old rule of dependency and protectorate with their new parti-coloured variation the mandate and the clear claim of the Asiatic peoples to equality and inde-

pendence. All other things still in the forefront belong to the prolongation of the surviving or else to the liquidation of the dead past: these two alone are living questions of the immediate future.

The forces of Socialism and Capitalism now look each other in the face all over Europe,—all other distinctions are fading, the old minor political quarrels within the nation grow meaningless,—but have not yet joined battle. The old middle class regime still holds the material power, keeps by the prestige of possession and men's habit of preferring present ills to an insecure adventure the mind of the uncertain mass and summons all its remaining forces to maintain its position. It is faced by the first actuality of a successful socialistic and revolutionary regime in Russia, but hitherto, although its repeated efforts to stifle it in its birth have been in vain, it has succeeded in isolating, in blockading and half starving it, in erecting against its westward urge an artificial frontier and in stemming the more rapid propagation of its master ideas by a constant campaign of discredit. Attempts at any soviet revolution west of the Russian line have been put an end to for the moment by legal or military repression. On the other hand, the economic condition of the world becomes worse and not better every year and it is becoming more and more evident that Capitalism has not only lost its moral credit but that it is unable to solve the material problems it has itself raised and brought to a head, while it blocks the way to any other solution. Every year that passes in this deadlock sees an enormous

increase in the strength of the socialistic idea and the number and quality and the extremist fervour of its adherents. There is undoubtedly almost everywhere a temporary stiffening and concentration of the old regime; this as a phenomenon very much resembles the similar stiffening and concentration of the old monarchic and aristocratic regime that was the first result of the war between revolutionary France and Europe: but it has less reality of force and little chance of an equal duration; for the current of revolution is now only checked and not as then temporarily fatigued and exhausted and the accumulated rush of the ideas and forces that make for change is in our day immeasurably greater. The materials of an immense political, social and economic overturn, perhaps of a series of formidable explosions strengthened in force by each check and compression, everywhere visibly accumulate.

The outstanding portent of things to come is the continued existence, success, unbroken progress of the Russian revolution. This event promises to be as significant in human history as the great overturn of established ideas and institutions initiated in France in the eighteenth century, and to posterity it may well be this and not the downfall of Germany for which the great war will be ever memorable. Its importance is quite independent of the merits and demerits or the chances of survival of the present Bolshevik regime. The Bolshevik dictatorship is admittedly only an instrument of transition, a temporary concentration of revolutionary force, just as the

Supreme Council and all that it supports is a temporary concentration of the opposing conservative forces. The achievements of this extraordinary government have been of a sufficiently astonishing character. Assailed continually from within and without, ruthlessly blockaded and starved and deprived of all means of sustenance and action except those it could create for itself out of itself or else conquer, repeatedly brought to the verge of downfall, it has survived all difficulties and dangers and rather derived always new strength from misfortune, overcome its internal and withstood its external enemies, spread itself in Asia beyond its own borders, organised out of chaos a strong civil and military instrument, and has had the force in the midst of scarcity, civil strife and foreign menace to lay the initial basis of a new type of society. This miracle of human energy is in itself no more than that, a repetition under more unfavourable circumstances of the extraordinary achievement of the Jacobins during the French Revolution. More important is the power of the idea that is behind these successes and has made them possible. It is a fact of only outward significance that the Bolsheviks not so long ago threatened with the loss of Moscow are now on the road to Warsaw. It is of much more significance that the western Powers find themselves driven at last to negotiate with the first successful communist government of modern times still denounced by them as a monstrosity to be destroyed and a danger to civilisation. But the thing of real significance is not these events that might have gone and might still

go otherwise and might turn out to be only an episode; it is rather this fundamental fact affecting future possibilities that a great nation marked out as one of the coming leaders of humanity has taken a bold leap into the hidden gulfs of the future, abolished the past foundations, made and persisted in a radical experiment of communism, replaced middle class parliamentarism by a new form of government and used its first energy of free life to initiate an entirely novel social order. It is acts of faith and audacities of this scale that change or hasten the course of human progress. It does not follow necessarily that what is being attempted now is the desirable or the definite form of the future society, but is a certain sign that a phase of civilisation is beginning to pass and the Time Spirit preparing a new phase and a new order.

It may well take time for the communistic idea to make its way westward and it may too undergo considerable modifications in the passage, but there is already a remarkable evolution in that sense. The Labour movement is everywhere completing its transformation from a reformist into a socialistic and therefore necessarily, in spite of present hesitations, a revolutionary type. The struggle of Labour for a better social status and a share in the government has grown obsolete : the accepted ideal is now the abolition of the capitalistic structure of society and the substitution of labour for wealth as the social basis and the governing power. The differences within the body of the movement touch no longer the principle but the means and process of the change and

precise form to be given to the coming socialistic government and society. It is only this division of counsels that still retards the onward motion and prevents the joining of the decided issue of battle. It is noticeable that the strength of the socialist and communistic idea increases as one goes eastward, diminishes in the opposite direction : the movement of progress is no longer from the west eastwards but from the east towards the occident. The more extreme forces are however daily increasing everywhere and are making themselves felt even in plutocratic America. In any case, whatever retardation of pace there may be, the direction of the stream is already clear and the result hardly doubtful. The existing European system of civilisation at least in its figure of capitalistic industrialism has reached its own monstrous limits, broken itself by its own mass and is condemned to perish. The issue of the future lies between a labour industrialism not very different except in organisation from its predecessor, some greater spirit and form of socialistic or communistic society such as is being attempted in Russia or else the emergence of a new and as yet unforeseen principle.

The upcoming force that opens a certain latitude for this last possibility is the resurgence of Asia. It is difficult to believe that Asia once free to think, act and live for herself will be for long content merely to imitate the past or the present evolution of Europe. The temperament of her peoples is marked off by too deep-seated a difference, the build and movement of their minds is of

another character. At present, however, the movement of resurgence in Asia is finding expression more by a preface, an attempt to vindicate her bare right to live for herself, than by any pregnant effort of independent creative thought or action. The Asiatic unrest is still the second prominent feature of the situation. It is manifest in different forms from Egypt to China. It takes the shape in the Moslem world of a rejection of protectorates and mandates and a ferment of formation of independent Asiatic states. It manifests in India in a growing dissatisfaction with half methods and a constantly accentuated vehemence of the demand for complete and early self-government. It is creating in the Far East obscurer movements the sense of which has yet to emerge. This unrest envisages as yet little beyond the beginnings of a free action and existence. It appeals to the ideas of liberty that have long been fully self-conscious and the formulas that are systematically applied in Europe, self-government, Home Rule, democracy, national independence. At the same time there is involved, subconscious as yet in the great Asiatic masses but already defining itself in more awakened minds, another issue that may seem at first sight incompatible or at least disparate with this imitative seizing on principles associated with the modern forms of freedom and progress,—an ideal of spiritual and moral independence and the defence against the European invasion of the subtle principle of Asiatic culture. In India the notion of an Asiatic, a spiritualised democracy has begun

to be voiced, though it is as yet vague and formless. The Khilafat agitation has a religious and therefore a cultural as well as a political motive and temper. The regime of the mandate is resisted because it signifies the political control and economic exploitation of Asia by Europe, but there is another more latent source of repugnance. The effective exploitation is impossible without the breaking and recasting of Asiatic life into the harsh moulds of European capitalism and industrialism and, although Asia must learn to live no longer in the magnificent but insufficient past but in the future, she must too demand to create that future in her own image. It is this twofold claim carrying in it the necessity of a double, an inner and an outer resistance that is the present meaning of the Asiatic unrest and the destined meaning of the Asiatic resurgence.

The capitalistic governments of Europe embarrassed by Asiatic unrest and resistance attempt to meet it with a concession in form and a denial in fact and principle. India is granted not the beginning of responsible government, but a first "substantial" step towards ; but it is a step hedged in with a paralysing accumulation of safeguards for British political and capitalistic interests and a significant condition that her farther progress must depend on the extent to which she is prepared to reform herself politically, economically and socially in the image of the British spirit. A French military force occupies Damascus, expels the king and government elected by the people, but promises to establish an

indigenous government subservient to the European interest and its mandate. England offers Mesopotamia an Arab government saddled with an Anglo-Indian administration and the moral and material benefits of the exploitation of the oil of the Mosul ; meanwhile she is fighting the insurgent population in order to force on it its own greater good against its own barbarous and ignorant will to independence. A British control is to guarantee the integrity of Persia. Palestine is to be colonised by a Jewish immigration from Europe and to be administered by a High Commissioner in the interests—but against the will—of all its races. The Turkish people stripped of temporal empire and the prestige of the Khalifate are to be free under a strict and close international control and to be compelled by a Greek army to accept this unprecedented happiness and this unequalled opportunity of becoming a civilised modern nation. Here much more than against the organised forces of Labour the old regime has the material power to enforce its dictates. It remains none the less certain that a solution of this kind will not put an end to the unrest of Asia. The attempt is likely to recoil upon itself, for these new burdens must impose a greatly added strain on an already impossible financial condition and hasten the social and economic revolution in Europe. And even if it were otherwise, the resurgence of a great continent cannot be so held under. One day it will surely prevail against whatever difficulties and possess its inevitable future.

These two predestined forces of the future, socialism and the Asiatic resurgence, tend for the moment to form at least a moral alliance. The Labour and socialistic parties in the now dominant nations are strongly opposed to the policy of their governments and extend their support to the claims of subject or menaced nationalities in Asia as well as in Europe. In the more advanced Asiatic countries, as in Ireland, the national movement allies itself closely with a nascent labour movement. Bolshevik Russia is in alliance with or sovietises and controls the policy of the existing independent States of central Asia, casts a ferment into Persia and lends whatever moral support it can to the Turk or the Arab. This tendency may have in itself little meaning beyond the sympathy created by reaction against a common pressure. Forces and interests in action are always opportunist and grasp in emergency at help or convenience from whatever quarter; but these alliances of pure interest, unless they find some more permanent support, are fragile and ephemeral combinations. Bolshevik Russia may set up Soviet governments in Georgia and Azerbaijan, but if these are only governments of occasion, if Sovietism does not correspond to or touch something more profound in the instinct, temperament and idea of these peoples, they are not likely to be durable. British Labour, although it makes no present conditions, expects a self-governing India to evolve in the sense of its own social and economic idea, but it is conceivable that a self-governing India may

break away from the now normal line of development and discover her own and unexpected social and economic order. All that we can say certainly at present is that the dominant governments of Europe have so managed that they find their scheme of things in opposition at once to the spirit and menaced by the growth of two great world forces, both compressed and held back by it and both evident possessors of the future.

That means that we are as yet far from a durable order and can therefore look forward to no suspension of the earth's troubles. The balance of the present, if such a chaotic fluctuation of shifts and devices can be called a balance, has no promise of duration, is only a moment of arrest, and we must expect, as soon as the sufficient momentum can come or circumstance open a door of escape for the release of compressed forces, more surprising and considerable movements, radical reversals and immense changes. The subject of supreme interest is not the circumstance that will set free their paths, for fate when it is ready takes advantage of any and every circumstance, but the direction they will take and the meaning they will envelop. The evolution of a socialistic society and the resurgence of Asia must effect great changes and yet they may not realise the larger human hope. Socialism may bring in a greater equality and a closer association into human life, but if it is only a material change, it may miss other needed things and even aggravate the mechanical burden of humanity and crush more heavily towards the earth its spirit. The resurgence

of Asia, if it means only a redressing or shifting of the international balance, will be a step in the old circle, not an element of the renovation, not a condition of the step forward and out of the groove that is now felt however vaguely to be the one thing needful. The present international policy of Labour carries in itself indeed at its end,—provided Labour in power is faithful to the mind of Labour in opposition,—one considerable promise, a juster equation between the national and the international idea, an international comity of free nations, a free, equal and democratic league of peoples in place of the present close oligarchy of powers that only carries the shadow of an unreal League as its appendage. An international equality and cooperation in place of the past disorder or barbaric order of domination and exploitation is indeed a first image that we have formed of the better future. But that is not all : it is only a framework. It may be at lowest a novel machinery of international convenience, it may be at most a better articulated body for the human race. The spirit, the power, the idea and will that are meant to inform or use it is the greater question, the face and direction of destiny that will be decisive.

The two forces that are arising to possess the future represent two great things, the intellectual idealism of Europe and the soul of Asia. The mind of Europe laboured by Hellenism and Christianity and enlarging its horizons by free thought and science has arrived at an idea of human perfectibility or progress expressed in the terms of an intellectual, material and vital freedom, equali-

ty and unity of close association, an active fraternity or comradeship in thought and feeling and labour. The difficulty is to make of the component parts of this idea a combined and real reality in practice and the effort of European progress has been a labour to discover and set up a social machinery that automatically turn out this production. The first equation discovered, an individualistic democracy, a system of political liberty and equality before the law, has helped only to a levelling as between the higher orders, the competitive liberty of the strongest and most skilful to arrive, an inhuman social inequality and economic exploitation, an incessant class war and a monstrous and opulently sordid reign of wealth and productive machinery. It is the turn now of another equation, an equality as absolute as can be fabricated amid the inequalities of Nature by reason and social science and machinery,—and most of all an equal association in the labour and the common profits of a collective life. It is not certain that this formula will succeed very much better than its predecessor. This equality can only be presently secured by strict regulation, and that means that liberty at least for a time must go under. And at any rate the root of the whole difficulty is ignored, that nothing can be real in life that is not made real in the spirit. It is only if men can be made free, equal and united in spirit that there can be a secure freedom, equality and brotherhood in their life. The idea and sentiment are not enough, for they are incomplete and combated by deep-seated nature and instinct and they are besides

inconstant and fluctuate. There must be an immense advance that will make freedom, equality and unity our necessary internal and external atmosphere. This can come only by a spiritual change and the intellect of Europe is beginning to see that the spiritual change is at least a necessity; but it is still too intent on rational formula and on mechanical effort to spare much time for discovery and realisation of the things of the spirit.

Asia has made no such great endeavour, no such travail of social effort and progress. Order, a secure ethical and religious framework, a settled economical system, a natural, becoming fatally a conventional and artificial, hierarchy have been her ordinary methods, everywhere indeed where she reached a high development of culture. These things she founded on her religious sense and sweetened and made tolerable by a strong communal feeling, a living humanity and sympathy and certain accesses to a human equality and closeness. Her supreme effort was to discover not an external but a spiritual and inner freedom and that carried with it a great realisation of spirituality, equality and oneness. This spiritual travail was not universalised nor any endeavour made to shape the whole of human life in its image. The result was a disparateness between the highest inner individual and the outward social life, in India the increasing ascetic exodus of the best who lived in the spirit out of the secure but too narrow walls of the ordinary existence and the sterilising idea that the greatest universal truth of spirit discovered by life could yet not be the spirit of that life and is only

realisable outside it. But now Asia enduring the powerful pressure of Europe is being forced to face the life problem again under the necessity of another and a more active solution. Assimilative, she may reproduce or imitate the occidental experiment of industrialism, its first phase of capitalism, its second phase of socialism; but then her resurgence will bring no new meaning or possibility into the human endeavour. Or the closer meeting of these two halves of the mind of humanity may set up a more powerful connection between the two poles of our being and realise some sufficient equation of the highest ideals of each, the inner and the outer freedom, the inner and the outer equality, the inner and the outer unity. That is the largest hope that can be formed on present data and circumstance for the human future.

But also, as from the mixing of various elements an unforeseen form emerges, so there may be a greater unknown something concealed and in preparation, not yet formulated in the experimental laboratory of Time, not yet disclosed in the design of Nature. And that then, some greater unexpected birth from the stress of the evolution may be the justifying result of which this unquiet age of gigantic ferment, chaos of ideas and inventions, clash of enormous forces, creation and catastrophe and dissolution is actually amid the formidable agony and tension of this great imperfect body and soul of mankind in creative labour.

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